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ARTHUR KOESTLER

THE work of Mr. Arthur Koestler enjoys a certain vague esteem, especially his novel *Darkness at Noon*. Possibly because his themes are extremely topical and controversial, references to his books are often short-winded, stopping at an assertion without a demonstration. The following pages are offered as a contribution to critical definition.

It would be fair to describe Mr. Koestler's as a war-time reputation. Many must have read his entire work for the first time when they returned to England. The chief innovations were the names of Mr. Koestler and of Mr. Warner, now much more insistently recommended than he was before the war. There were also several journalists who had achieved prominence, among them Mr. George Orwell. None of these writers is negligible. But the mention of Mr. Warner and of Mr. Orwell at once prompts the remark, that Mr. Koestler is much the more serious writer. There is more pressure behind his words, the pressure of experience. Mr. Orwell also has had experiences which occasionally give to his work a seriousness similar to Mr. Koestler's. He has some of the virtues of Mr. E. M. Forster. But insularity has got the better of him. It is difficult to see why he decided to publish *Animal Farm*. Mr. Warner is an earnest man. But his interests seem to have been derived from the reading of newspapers. When he writes of large European themes his strenuous prose becomes very trying.

Mr. Koestler is intelligent, his literary gift unquestionable, and his work, which has received distinct praise, compels discussion at the most serious level. I take the following details of his personal history from the jackets of two of his novels. He was born in Budapest in 1905, a Hungarian subject, and studied engineering and psychology at the University of Vienna. Before the age of twenty-one he had farmed in Palestine, had worked with an Arabian architect and had edited a short-lived weekly publication in Cairo. At twenty-one he became successively Middle East and Paris correspondent to the Ullstein chain of newspapers in Germany, took part in the Arctic expedition of the Graf Zeppelin, and was in turn science editor and foreign editor of various Ullstein newspapers in Berlin. In 1931 Koestler joined the Communist Party, travelled through central Asia and spent a year in the U.S.S.R. In 1933 he settled in France. In 1936 he went to Spain to cover the civil war for the *News Chronicle*. He was arrested by the Fascists, was condemned to death under a charge of espionage, and spent three months in prison. The British Foreign Office eventually succeeded in procuring his exchange for a prisoner of the Valencia Government. Eighteen months before the non-aggression pact was signed between Germany and Russia Koestler left the Communist Party, and 1938 found him back in Paris where he edited an anti-Soviet,

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anti-Nazi weekly. When war broke out in 1939 he was arrested and sent to the Le Vernet detention camp, from which he was released in 1940, again through the intervention of British friends. He escaped to England and joined the British Army as a private. He is in his forties.

The characteristic which all readers agree in ascribing to Mr. Koestler's work is 'intensity'. *Darkness at Noon* begins: 'The cell door slammed behind Rubashov'—and the expectation thus set up is not disappointed. *Thieves in the Night* begins: ' "If I get killed to-day, it won't be by falling off the top of a truck" Joseph thought, digging his fingers into the tarred canvas cover of the swaying, lurching vehicle. He lay on his back, with arms spread out, a horizontally crucified figure on a rocking hearse under the stars'. Again the same intensity is aimed at, but the deliberateness is felt at once in the strained tone, in the violence and spurious exaltation of the language. The events which Mr. Koestler describes usually have the interest of topicality or unusualness, and they develop intensity in much the same way that a film develops it, by vividness of presentation, by insistence, and suspense. But Mr. Koestler's intensity is so unrelieved and so insistent that it seems often not to emerge from the situation in a novel but rather to satisfy some need in the author. I have the impression in reading him, that he is trying to justify himself to us, to justify the existence of these intense feelings in his own breast. He is always extremely conscious of the reader, of the effect he is making. A kind of emotional bullying is frequently my impression in reading his two most important novels *Darkness at Noon* and *Thieves in the Night*. Mr. Koestler is not unaware of this tendency in himself: he plainly finds it very difficult to be fair. 'We cannot afford to see the other man's point' says one of the characters in *Thieves in the Night*. And Joseph, the character through which the author conveys much of his own experience, writes in his diary: ' "I wonder whether any other race has the same capacity for doctrinaire fanaticism as ours. It has, I suppose to do with the Exile: émigrés always have cliques and quarrels, and we have been émigrés for 2000 years. The exiled have nothing to hang on to except doctrines and convictions: hence they fight over ideas like dogs over bones. The others call it politely our semitic intensity" '. This intensity has sources which cannot be detected by the critic, and of which the author himself is not fully conscious. The frequently sardonic tone in which Mr. Koestler writes is a strong clue: it suggests that the author considers himself peculiarly privileged by his experience to describe the sufferings of others. He tends to identify *himself* with Rubashov, and the character draws on some of the intensity of the author's feelings for his own race. ' "We shall always be betrayed", says Joseph, "because something in us asks to be betrayed. There is this urge for the return to earth and normality; and there is that other urge to continue the hunt for a lost Paradise which is not in space" '. Mr. Koestler is fond of that sort of emotional flourish, and it is not a matter to be ignored in an account of his intensity. Rubashov

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also draws life from this utopianism, thwarted, oppressed and imprisoned. Rubashov is made in his last moments to reflect: 'But where was the Promised Land? Did there really exist any such goal for this wandering mankind? That was a question to which he would have liked an answer before it was too late'. The ingenuousness of this is not in character, nor is the Old Testament idiom, but comes from the author. It is part of his determination to read wide significance into Rubashov's death.

Darkness at Noon is, amongst other things, an interpretation of the Moscow Trials. The theme is intrinsically an important one. Yet it is not such that the feelings of most people could attach themselves to it, as they might to a story of common violence or misfortune. One felt that it needed interpreting: and yet the reluctance of imaginative writers other than Mr. Koestler to come forward with interpretations and strong convictions is understandable. For in presenting the struggle as one between Persecutor and Persecuted one would certainly be simplifying unduly. One would run the risk of identifying oneself with the victim, and thereby resigning the right to judge. One would risk drawing against the Russians the strong emotions aroused by the Nazis. There was a natural hesitation to interpret events in a country threatened by militant nazidom. Reading *Darkness at Noon* I feel the need of some third party, some standard of reference, such as the teacher of languages in *Under Western Eyes*. It may be urged that Mr. Koestler does not invite us to accept Rubashov as White and Gletkin as Black. I thing that he does. I hope to show that Mr. Koestler is not fastidious, that he does in fact insist that we accept Rubashov at the author's valuation, and that to this end he turns all his intensity upon us. I should like to believe that both Rubashov and Gletkin are objectively presented in the light of a total wisdom. But I fear it is not the case. The author assumes that we will accept Rubashov whether we admire what he represents or no. And the emotional methods Koestler employs are not slight blemishes but the sign of a radical over-simplification. And, I think, self-ignorance. I find in Mr. Koestler what has been described as 'a dominative mind in reverse'.

Mr. Koestler, then, took it upon himself to make the Trials real to us. The main part of the book is taken up with the imprisoned man's reveries and his interrogation. The most poignant chapters in it are those in which the isolated man communicates with prisoners in adjoining cells by means of a tapped-out quadratic alphabet. They create, more vividly than anything I know, the sense of helplessness and the perilous hold on sanity of imprisoned men. But the book aims to be more than an account of prison psychology: more, also, than a critical presentation of the contest between two sorts of revolutionary. There are signs that Mr. Koestler set out to write with ironical detachment: but he soon slips into the more congenial task of persuading the reader to take sides, and to believe that choices are simpler than they are. He directs his intense power to this end and causes Rubashov to

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generalize freely on the significance of his own fate. Much of the generalization has dated badly and it is usually too fluid to invite confidence. For example, when we come to this self-justification by Rubashov: ' "Our press and our schools cultivate chauvinism, militarism, dogmatism, conformism and ignorance. The arbitrary power of the government is unlimited and unexampled in history; freedom of the press, of opinion and of movement are as thoroughly exterminated as though the proclamation of the Rights of Man had never been . . . We whip the groaning masses of the country towards a theoretical future happiness, which only we can see. For the energies of this generation are exhausted: they were spent in the Revolution: for this generation is bled white and there is nothing left of it but a moaning, numbed, apathetic lump of sacrificial flesh" '—we are made to look again at the date of the novel, 1938 to 1940; and perhaps also to recall Mr. Eliot's recent remark that 'A considerable time must elapse before we can draw any illustration from Russia'. There is something unconsidered in Mr. Koestler's approach to his subject: he has not clearly asked himself whether he intends to achieve the understanding and impersonality of art, or to write highly-charged propaganda. Conrad described his own aim in *Under Western Eyes* as 'trying to catch the very soul of things Russian'. It is not a description that one could apply to *Darkness at Noon*. Mr. Koestler's Russians might be Germans, only less efficient: no more than the uniformed puppets of the popular film. Mr. Koestler is not prepared to allow any humanity to his enemies. As several critics have remarked, he is something of a disappointed commissar.

The comparison of Mr. Koestler with Conrad must have been made by most readers, especially of *Darkness at Noon* with *Under Western Eyes*. Conrad certainly had more cause than Mr. Koestler to loathe everything Russian but he wrote not only with detachment but with pity—which is not self-pity: and he is careful not to generalize what he cannot make implicit. He is fastidious: he does not intrude: the teacher of languages is not Conrad. He wrote in his preface: 'My greatest anxiety was in being able to strike and sustain the note of scrupulous impartiality. The obligation of absolute fairness was imposed on me historically and hereditarily, by the peculiar experience of race and family, in addition to my primary conviction that truth alone is the justification of any fiction which makes the least claim to the quality of art or may hope to take its place in the culture of men and women of its time. I had never been called before to a greater effort of detachment: detachment from all passions, prejudices and even from personal memories. *Under Western Eyes* on its first appearance in England was a failure with the public, perhaps because of that very detachment'. The extreme contrast to this fastidiousness is the journalistic opportunism of Mr. Koestler's work and its quick popularity. Again Conrad writes: 'Razumov is treated sympathetically. Why should he not be? . . . Being nobody's child he feels rather more keenly than another that he is a Russian—or he is nothing . . . Nobody

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is exhibited as a monster here'. Mr. Koestler, on the other hand, presents, as symbol and representative of modern Russia, the monster Gletkin. 'His boots creaked at every step, his starched uniform crackled, and a sourish smell of sweat and leather became noticeable'—a description which might of course apply to any man in uniform. This description of the monster is repeated again and again in a technique suggesting the simplifying camera. But, as Conrad knew, monsters are not enough in a theme of this kind. The effect of Mr. Koestler's book is to flatter complacency much as a film flatters it. He dwells, for example, on the disorderliness of the prison doctor's clinic: 'The infirmary was small and the air stuffy: it smelled of carbolic and tobacco. A bucket and two pans were filled to the brim with cotton-wool swabs and dirty bandages. The doctor sat at a table with his back to them, reading the newspaper and chewing bread and dripping . . . He was bald and had an unusually small skull, covered with white fluff, which reminded Rubashov of an ostrich'. In short, another monster: and the monsters do betray the abstract nature of Mr. Koestler's intensity. He is something of an engineer in human affairs: he wants quick results. Reading Conrad's novels we pick up as we go some reflection on life, some generalization from experience, some rhythm of feeling, which collectively establish our confidence in the writer's spirit and intention, in the writer's qualifications, his wisdom: but *Darkness at Noon*, though it is full of generalities, gives us nothing to grasp and to trust. Its intensity is not generous but political—as if the writer merely intends that the prisoner and imprisoner should change places. What is so depressing in this novel is the fact that neither of Mr. Koestler's alternatives represents anything very admirable, although we are constrained to accept the author's choice. And one feels at times that the author relishes and savours the prison atmosphere. There is a kind of ascetic expansiveness in his description of it.

After several readings Rubashov remains an intangible figure. His preoccupations elude us although he is plainly meant to carry our sympathy. As an imprisoned man he has our pity. But the author plainly expects the reader's unconditional approval for the essential passages in Rubashov's self-justification. For example, for such a passage as this: 'For forty years he had fought against economic fatality. It was the central ill of humanity, the cancer which was eating into its entrails. It was there that one must operate: the rest of the healing process would follow. All else was dilettantism, romanticism, charlatanism. One cannot heal a person mortally ill by pious exhortations. The only solution was the surgeon's knife and his cool calculation'. I cannot relate the passage to any possible actuality: the medical metaphors are striking, indeed formidable, but I fail to see what they are about. The prisoner is divided from his interrogators principally by his preference for international revolution and his disapproval of increasing Russian nationalism. Mr. Koestler shows himself quite incapable of evaluating national feeling as a social positive: it is this incapacity that

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helps to produce throughout the novel a sense of strain and unreality, as if something important were being ignored and left out. The differences, as stated by Gletkin, are certainly not trivial, especially in a political system as barbarously inflexible as the communist.

Significantly, the first interrogation of Rubashov begins with a wrangle over the proprietary rights to the plural pronoun 'we'. The discussion is of course potentially interesting; it is a preoccupation from which no modern writer of importance can escape, and Henry James, Conrad, Synge, Lawrence, Yeats, Mr. Forster and Mr. Eliot constantly return to it, indeed it is at the centre of their work. Rubashov tells his interrogator: ' "Leave the masses out of it. You understand nothing of them. Nor probably do I any more. Once, when the great 'we' still existed, we understood them as no one had ever understood them before . . . At that time we were called the party of the Plebs. What did the others know of history? . . . They wondered at the changing forms of the surface and could not explain them. But we had descended into the depths, into the formless, anonymous masses, which at all times constituted the substance of history; and we were the first to discover her laws of motion: we had discovered the laws of her inertia, of the slow changing of her molecular structure, and of her sudden eruptions . . . We dug in the primeval mud of history and there we found her laws . . . And now you have buried it all again . . . You killed the 'we'; you destroyed it" '. But by this time Rubashov has become merely the mouthpiece of Mr. Koestler, the disgruntled internationalist. There is a fluidity of assertion here, a flow of images, molecules and laws of motion about which I feel a strong mistrust: one recognizes the style of *The Yogi and the Commissar*. Mr. Koestler's sympathies do not allow him to realize how much more cogent than Rubashov's the arguments of Ivanov and Gletkin often appear. So great, indeed, is the author's confidence of having attached our sympathy to Rubashov that he is finally deliberately associated with Christ, in the emotional surge of the book's concluding section. Whilst listening to his daughter reading the newspaper report of Rubashov's trial, the porter Vasily whispers verses from the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke. "And the soldiers led him away into the hall called Praetorium . . . " I do not find it possible to respond to this bullying exaltation. Mr. Koestler has made the situation much simpler than we know it to be, and the emotion he wrings from it seems rather cheap and expected. He might have avoided this over-simplification and also achieved a certain detachment had he been able to recognize any value at all in Russian consciousness of national identity: to him national sentiment is an old-fashioned irrelevance.

The weakness of the novel are conspicuous in the collection of essays *The Yogi and the Commissar*. The same lack of emotional fastidiousness is much more obtrusive here: and the naïvety of some of Mr. Koestler's intense aspirations is suggested by these sentences: 'During the first few years Soviet myth and Russian reality were

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fairly congruent. It was the heroic age in which legends are generated. Behind the smoke there was real fire. And what a fire! The people had seized the power and had maintained itself in power on one-sixth of the earth. Private ownership, the profit motive, sexual taboos, social conventions were abolished practically in one stroke. There were no more rich and poor, masters and servants, officers and men. The husband had no longer authority over his wife, the parent over his child, the teacher over his pupil. The history of Homo Sapiens seemed to start from scratch. There was a thunder behind the words of those unheard-of decrees like the voice from Sinai which gave the Ten Commandments. Those who listened felt as if some rigid crust inside them, the parched crust of scepticism, frustration, resigned common sense had suddenly burst open'. Here, I believe, we are in touch with some of the things which Rubashov represents.

Throughout these essays Mr. Koestler talks a great deal about 'values', but he does not come near to saying in what his values are embodied. His inability to give 'value' to feelings of nationality allows him to make one or two startling observations. He writes: 'If ever there was a chance of Socialism in Britain it was in the period from Dunkirk to the fall of Tobruk. However, the working class lacked the political maturity to grasp its opportunity'. So much for the British working class. Mr. Koestler is here not merely blind to national loyalties but also inexcusably ignorant—for a man who has given so much of his life to politics and makes such parade of psychology—ignorant of the unusual social structure in the British Isles, the unusual distribution of economic power, and the satisfaction of wartime full employment. He is incapable of conceiving a situation in which classes do not think primarily of grasping opportunities; so he ascribes national loyalties to 'political immaturity'. As a consequence of his abstract notion of 'values' his talk of an intelligentsia is also unsatisfactory. When he speaks of 'a new fraternity in a new spiritual climate' and exclaims 'Let us build oases!', I do not feel that he has asked himself the questions—Who is included in this emphatic plural? The author and who else? And what language shall they speak? It seems indeed that the author wishes to create a world fit for Koestler to live in—'starting from scratch'. In some recent essays in which he examines his experience to discover the conditions necessary to civilized life, Mr. Eliot claims for himself the title of social biologist. I do not believe that the author of *The Yogi and the Commissar* ever undertook such an examination: or that he would recognize the usefulness of the title. There are of course some interesting things in the book, especially the discussion of Russian propaganda. But again one is disquieted by an obvious unwillingness to grant any merit to Russians. For example, as if to explain away Russian military effort he writes: 'The population of Soviet Russia is more than twice that of Germany'. Then he adds: 'The endurance and fatalism of the Russian soldier are proverbial', implying that endurance and fatalism are not such estimable qualities as German

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discipline. The author of *Darkness at Noon* seems here to be on the defensive.

There is one passage in the book in which the thwarted internationalist reveals ingenuous disappointment that the war should have made people more conscious of what they were fighting for. He writes: 'One of the most powerful emotional factors is Xenophobia, from its totemistic tribal form to modern nationalism. This factor too is largely independent of *real* self-interest: thus the Socialist workers of Warsaw took arms against the Russian revolutionary army in 1920: the Arabs of Palestine took arms against Jewish infiltration which economically brought them enormous benefits. In the present war whenever Nationalism conflicted with social ideology, Nationalism won. Fascist Greece under Metaxas fought the Italian Fascist invader: democratic Britain courted Fascist Spain; Japanese feudalism found a modus vivendi with Russian Bolshevism: in other words, all the political isms might as well not have existed . . . ' The ingenuous regret expressed in this passage should be sufficient to destroy confidence in Mr. Koestler's political insight. 'Infiltration' is a betraying word applied to Palestine, and subsequent history is a sufficient comment on the enormous benefits in store for the Arabs once their soil was bought up. When Mr. Koestler writes Xenophobia with a capital X, he is very far from realizing that national feeling makes the pattern of significant differences which is Europe, that it is the focus of the most complete and intimate agreements and shared meanings, one of the disinterested ideals or 'values' that Europeans will live for in the struggle of the rival materialisms of America and Russia. Mr. Koestler's attitude is that of a man who has nothing to lose. He does not show us things that he loves: he offers no criteria by which to judge what is valuable. There is nothing in his work up to *The Yogi and the Commissar* to suggest that he had ever undertaken an analysis of his own sincerity—an examination of what he could possibly mean by an 'oasis'. Mr. Koestler, unlike Kafka, attempts to ignore his fate, his luck, and projects his isolation on to his characters in revolt. He thus escapes from his difficulty and distorts his experience. I cannot imagine Mr. Koestler writing as Conrad, with a humility that brings tears to one's eyes, wrote: 'I heard myself addressed in English—the speech of my secret choice, of my future, of my friendships, of the deepest affections, of hours of toil and hours of ease, of my very dreams! And if . . . . . I dare not claim it aloud as my own, then, at any rate the speech of my children'.

Before passing to some observations on *Thieves in the Night*, I should like to mention *Twilight Bar*, the play, satirical in intention, which Mr. Koestler wrote in 1944 as a new version of a play written and lost in 1933. It is without value except as an illustration of Mr. Koestler's confusion. He explains in the preface that the play 'was an escape from the pressure of reality, and again I have the guilty feeling of having disgraced the blackboard all set for a solemn lesson in history'. In the play the inhabitants of an island

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are visited by travellers from another planet who have the power to destroy all life in the places they visit, and to colonize them for their own kind. They spare those places in which the total happiness —measured by a Koestlerian calculus—exceeds pain. The islanders are given a short time to improve their total. Frightened by this threat they make elaborate carnival: only to relapse when they know they are safe. These are the last words of the dialogue: ' "The more I think of it the less I understand what happened to the people on this island. When they were frightened they decided to be happy because they had no other choice. And they tasted happiness and found that it was good; they attempted the impossible and found that it worked. Then when they ceased to be frightened they said: now that the danger has passed we can be unhappy again: and with a sigh of relief they rushed back to their old misery". "That's how we are made . . . Each little skunk enjoys his own stink" '.

It appears that Mr. Koestler, like other people, enjoyed the sense of simplified purposes and massive solidarity brought by the war, and he is here expressing his regret that the possibility of heroic fantasy would and ('it is evil things we are fighting'), and that we should all break out of our militarist unity. 'Each little skunk enjoys his own stink' is his statement of exasperation—it is not the only Swiftian touch in the play. That kind of irritation underlies, I think, all of Mr. Koestler's work.

Mr. Koestler's most recent book *Thieves in the Night* is his most direct attempt at analysis of his own intensities. He is here obviously trying to come to terms with national feeling, despite the fact that his fellow-Jews are frequently repulsive to him, and despite the lack of a national language. The book is not a novel but, as the sub-title states, a chronicle. There is in it an intimacy and sense of human experience that give it exceptional vividness and life. But even sympathetic critics agree in finding it entirely propagandist in intention. Mr. Koestler again finds it necessary to create a monster to symbolize the Arab world; his Mukhtar is fat and repulsive, his son hideous. At 6.30 a.m. the Mukhtar was woken by Issa, his eldest son. Issa had been standing for quite a while next to the bed not daring to touch his father; his close-set, slightly squinting eyes in the pale pock-marked face were anxiously fixed on the enormous bulk in the blue and yellow striped pyjamas. The Mukhtar had thrown the blanket off in his sleep: his crumpled pyjama-jacket had slipped upward, revealing a strip of brownish skin covered with black fluff just above the navel'. This recalls the Doctor in *Darkness at Noon*—'his skull bald and covered with white fluff'. The spittle of physical revulsion spurts from the author's lips.

Most readers of the book will have felt misgivings at the attempt to provoke intense feelings against the Arabs, and to win moral feeling to the Jewish side. The Palestine affair is an ugly example of international expediency, and cannot even be discussed in ethical terms. The writer who can deliberately work up intense feelings against the Arabs must be incapable of self-criticism. The theme of

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the book is obviously extremely controversial, and a writer with more delicacy than Mr. Koestler would probably not have written such a book at all. Many critics have noticed that the book is especially calculated to win American sympathy. There is in it a big-jawed, good-natured, boozing American: and there is some comedy—much indebted to Mr. Forster but rather shrill—at the expense of British colonial life. (Mr. Forster's comedy leaves a much more distinct impression of the cruelty and the suffering). Whereas in *Darkness at Noon* Mr. Koestler intends the English reader to feel self-righteous horror at Russian interrogation methods, in *Thieves in the Night* he caters for American opinion of British methods with this: ' "One of our fellows escaped yesterday from Jerusalem prison . . . Both his thumbs were dislocated as a result of being suspended by them for two hours. He was also beaten on the genitals, bastinadoed, and questioned while having water poured into his nostrils" '. ' "They have started third-degreeing our boys. The Police here is riddled with former Black and Tans who know this kind of job" '. Now the knowledge that such things happen should have qualified the feeling in *Darkness at Noon*. The writer, if he is to be interesting, must, like the critic, constantly refer his intense feelings to the universe, that is, to all that he knows and all that he feels about all that he knows. Mr. Koestler juggles his feelings: he makes acceptance easy for the reader he has in mind.

The valuable things in the book are the intelligent analyses of the problems facing the new colonists. He writes of the first generation of Palestine-born children: 'Their parents were the most cosmopolitan race of the earth—they are provincial and chauvinistic. Their parents were sensitive bundles of nerves with awkward bodies—their nerves are whipcords and their bodies those of a horde of Hebrew Tarzans . . . Their parents were notoriously polygot—they have been brought up in one language which had been hibernating for twenty centuries before being brought artificially back to life . . . There in the language is the main rub. The revival of Hebrew from its holy petrifaction to serve again as the living tongue of a nation was a fantastic achievement. But this miracle involves a heavy sacrifice. Our children are brought up in a language which has not developed since the beginning of the Christian era'.

There is much interesting comment throughout the book in which Mr. Koestler—Joseph is merely a mouthpiece—analyses the quality of national feeling. He has to admit, at last, that he does not possess it and that it will not be easily created. But it is certainly a development that Mr. Koestler now seems to recognize that national feeling is a positive—and that it is more than Xenophobia. He seems to have abandoned his belief that a country could be established by some beautiful act of supernatural engineering: he begins to realize that values are embodied in forms, in meanings, in language, in group customs, the life of significant soil.

The book is, in effect, a justification of terrorism. But the process by which the English-Jew Joseph comes to abandon his

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liberal ideals merely betrays the impossibility of giving non-Jews a favourable impression of terrorist activity. For Mr. Koestler finds it necessary to introduce a beautiful but neurotic girl Dina, symbol to Joseph of all the sufferings of his people at the hands of the Nazis, and to have her atrociously murdered by Arabs. We are given details: 'She must have put up a strong fight, for her fingernails were broken and there was also blood and bits of skin between her teeth. They counted twenty-seven stabs on her, none of which could have caused instantaneous death. Her nose was broken and some of her hair torn out with shreds of scalp'.

This is Joseph's justification for joining the terrorists. It is obviously too easy a resolution of Koestler's problem. He has tried to work up enough intensity to believe himself in the right, to act with a flourish of righteous heroism. But the indulgence of animosity against the Arabs is gross, for Mr. Koestler deliberately rouses against them, in Dina, the reader's sympathy for victims of German concentration camps. Mr. Koestler is, I fear, painfully unscrupulous in these important matters. His creation of monsters is merely a confession of failure to present the human situation.

Koestler remains for me a gifted propagandist. I recognize his intelligence and the intensity of some of his experience but he has no impersonality. It seems to me that he is only now making discoveries which most people make much earlier in life. He insists on the luxury of hating his adversary, as through prison bars. His intensities are not referred to the whole of experience: he deliberately suppresses what is inconvenient. As a propagandist he is thoroughly unscrupulous. His sardonic tone of the man who has suffered seems at times a form of conceit.

G. D. KLINGOPULOS.

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THE 'CORTEGIANO' AND THE CIVILIZATION OF THE RENAISSANCE[1]

I.

WE are often told that English Literature owes a great debt to Castiglione's *Libro del Cortegiano* (*The Book of the Courtier*); this is, indeed, normally regarded as one of the outstanding examples of England's general debt to the Italian Renaissance. That such an influence existed and that it was great, is beyond doubt. But the value of this influence is not beyond doubt; it is the aim of this paper to raise this question.

The scene of Castiglione's book is laid at the small court of Urbino, in the year 1507. The members of the ducal household assemble every evening in one of the rooms of the palace where they sometimes invent 'certain witty sports and pastimes' or 'disputations of divers matters'. (I quote, in modern spelling, from Sir Thomas Hoby's translation of 1561). These games and debates are presided over by the Duchess, and among the usual participants are Giuliano de Medici (Lorenzo's son), the two Fregosos, Bibbiena, Pietro Bembo, and other 'virtuosi' of the Italian Renaissance (including, of course, the author, Count Baldassarre Castiglione). One evening, the company decide to discuss the 'good courtier, specifying all such conditions and particular qualities as of necessity must be in him that deserveth this name'. It is laid down that 'the principal and true profession of a courtier ought to be in feats of arms . . . And therefore will I have him to be of good shape, and well proportioned in his limbs, and to show strength, lightness and quickness, and to have understanding in all exercises of the body that belong to a man of war'. But physical exercises are not enough. The courtier must also be acquainted with literature, music, and the fine arts. 'Let him much exercise himself in poets, and no less in orators and historiographers, and also in writing both rhyme and prose, and especially in this our vulgar tongue'. He must be able to read music and to play some musical instruments, and he must have some skill in drawing and be a connoisseur of painting and sculpture. In general, 'let him do whatever other men do: so he decline not at any time from commendable deeds, but governeth himself with

[1]A paper read to the Doughty Society, Downing College, on 4th March, 1949.

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that good judgment that will not suffer him to enter into any folly. Let him laugh, dally, jest, and dance, yet in such wise that he may always declare himself to be witty and discreet, and everything that he doth or speaketh, let him do it with a grace' ('aggraziato').

How can the courtier acquire this necessary grace? Castiglione lays down one comprehensive rule, and in expressing it he has to coin a new word: 'sprezzatura'. The courtier, whatsoever he does or says, must seem 'to do it without pain, and (as it were) not minding it . . . *That* may be said to be a very art, that appeareth not to be art'. In music, for example, 'for all he be skilful and doth well understand it, yet will I have him to dissemble the study and pains that a man must needs take in all things that are well done. And let him make semblance that he esteemeth but little in himself that quality'. (Here one cannot help thinking of the modern descendants of the *Cortegiano*. We have all met them, the devotees of 'sprezzatura'—the prizemen who never do a stroke of work, the Blues who never do any training).

Nearly all of these statements can be found in the first book of the *Cortegiano*. The second book merely elaborates certain aspects of the ideal courtier's life, and the third book discusses the qualities of the courtier's female counterpart, the 'donna di palazzo'. The fourth and last book has higher aims altogether. What, it asks first, is the purpose of the courtier's life? It is to acquire, by the means described earlier, 'the good will and favour of the Prince he is serving, that he may break his mind to him and always inform him frankly of the truth of every matter meet for him to understand, without fear or peril to displease him'. The courtier must in fact be the Prince's moral tutor, leading him, with all the graces at his disposal, 'through the rough way of virtue, beguiling him with a wholesome craft, as the wary physicians do, who many times when they minister to young and tender children in their sickness a medicine of bitter taste, anoint the cup about the brim with some sweet liquor'.

Finally, the most notable man of letters among the courtiers of Urbino, Pietro Bembo, concludes this series of dialogues with a Platonic panegyric on Love. Love begins as the sensual attraction between the sexes, and such attraction there is and must be between the courtier and the 'donna di palazzo'. But this, Bembo maintains, is only the first stage of a noble pilgrimage, leading from sensual love to spiritual love, and thence to the contemplation of universal love, of God himself. 'Let us therefore bend all our force and thoughts of soul to this most holy light, that showeth us the way which leadeth to heaven: and . . . let us climb up the stairs, which at the lowermost step have the shadow of sensual beauty, to the high mansion place where the heavenly, amiable and right beauty dwelleth, which lieth hidden in the innermost secrets of God'. 'Bembo', Castiglione adds, spoke 'with such vehemence that a man would have thought him (as it were) ravished and beside himself', and having finished, 'he stood still without once moving, holding his eyes towards heaven'.

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II.

Who, we might ask, was this enthusiastic orator, this despiser of the mere 'shadow of sensual beauty'? If we leave the pages of Castiglione's book for a moment and follow Bembo into real life, we shall gain further insight into the world of which he was a representative member. He belonged to a patrician family of Venice; at the time of the Urbino dialogues he was about thirty-seven years old. In his youth he travelled with his father, who was in the Venetian diplomatic service, and spent some time at the Medicean court in Florence. Later, he lived for several years at the smaller, but equally cultivated courts of Ferrara and Urbino; in Ferrara he fell ardently in love with Lucrezia Borgia. Next, he became secretary of Pope Leo X, and chief 'arbiter litterarum' at the Papal court. In Rome he began to live with a beautiful girl called Morosina who bore him three children and remained with him until her death (it is perhaps not irrelevant to point out that Bembo was technically a clergyman and derived a large income from ecclesiastical benefices which he administered from a safe distance). In 1520 Bembo retired from Rome to Padua, and began to realize his old dream of a life 'procul negotiis', devoted to study and enjoyment. Here is his own description of his life in his Paduan villa: 'I read and write as much as I like; I ride, I walk, I often stroll in a spinney at the bottom of my garden. From this pleasant and beautiful garden I sometimes gather with my own hands the first-fruits for my supper, and some mornings I collect a basketful of strawberries, which spread their fragrance in my mouth and all over my table. I need not mention that my house is full of roses all day long. I also have the opportunity of using a boat on a graceful little stream which passes my house and after a very short time flows into the Brenta, a fine and serene river. The same river washes my fields from another side, and so, going for a good walk of an evening, it is always water rather than land, that delights me'. The villa itself resembled a museum. There were portraits of Dante, Petrarca and Boccaccio, and a supposed likeness of Petrarca's Laura; a portrait of Bembo himself, by Raphael, and a picture by Mantegna; a number of female nudes; classical statues of marble and bronze, mostly representing mythological figures; ancient vases, medals of all sorts, richly mounted gems, numerous coins, and old inscriptions. Bembo was also a collector of Greek, Latin, and Provençal manuscripts and possessed an extensive library. It was in this setting that Bembo received his friends and discussed with them the matters nearest to his heart: the excellence of Ciceronian Latin and the legitimate use of the vernacular in poetry. From this quasi-retreat he also conducted a vast correspondence, and he never allowed himself to lose sight of the political world that for him and his friends centred in Rome.

This manysidedness, it need hardly be stressed, has nothing in common with the efforts of the great 'uomini universali' of the Italian Renaissance, of Leonardo or Michelangelo; Bembo was far

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too weak to attempt a genuine synthesis of the various spheres of experience. In town or country, at court or in his villa, life was calling him merely to 'delight and play', to a round of refined and sensuous pleasures. What then of his Platonic contempt for the senses? Bembo's Platonism, so elegantly propounded by him, is simply an additional adornment of life, not its centre and guide. In Bembo there was a wide gulf between ideal and reality.

It so happens that Bembo wrote a good deal of poetry. He was indeed regarded as the representative Italian poet and critic of his age, creating by his own productions the accepted standards of literature. Here, for example, is the octet from a typical sonnet of his, on a very serious subject—the death of Morosina, the mother of his children:

> Che mi giova mirar donne, e donzelle,
> E prati, e selve, e rivi, e'l bel governo,
> Che fa del mondo il buon motore eterno,
> Mar, terra, cielo, e vaghe o ferme stelle?
> Spenta colei; ch'un Sol fu tra le belle
> E tra le sagge, or è mio nembo interno;
> Forme d' orror mi sembra quant 'io scerno:
> Esser cieco vorrei per non vedelle.

('What can it help me to look at ladies, and meadows, and woods, and rivers, and the beautiful order which the Eternal Mover has established in the world, to look at sea, earth, sky, and the fixed or moving stars?

She is dead who was a sun among the beautiful and the wise, and is now a cloud within me. Now I can only see shapes of horror: I should like to be blind so as not to see them').

Now Italian verse always *sounds* so impressive that we must first get rid of its intoxicating effect. Having done so we may perceive that the rhythm of these lines is quite mechanical. The enumeration of visual objects is purely decorative; it has no power of evocation. And therefore the writer's wish not to see these objects does not achieve any poignancy: he has not actually seen anything at all.

Take, on the other hand, a poem by Bembo's contemporary, Vittoria Colonna. It is also a sonnet, written for her friend and spiritual director, Cardinal Pole, at a time of great anguish and distress. She speaks of herself:

> . . . che sembro andar scarca e leggiera
> E'n poca terra ho il cor chiuso e sepolto.
> ('I who seem unbound and unencumbered—
> And yet my heart is buried in narrow soil').

And then she concludes by addressing Pole:

> 'Tu per gli aperti spaziosi campi
> Del ciel cammini, e non piu nebbia o pietra
> Ritardo o ingombra il tuo spedito corso.

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Io grave d'anni agghiaccio. Or tu, ch'avvampi
D'alma fiamma celeste, umil m'impetra
Dal comun Padre eterno omai soccorso'.
('Travel thou through the open, spacious fields
Of Heaven—neither cloud nor boulder
May hinder or retard thy speedy course.
Heavy with age, I've turned to ice; but thou
Who burnst with heavenly flame of life, humbly
Beseech our Father for eternal help').

Attention should be drawn to the simple but vivid contrasts: 'narrow soil—spacious fields', 'ice—flame of life', and particularly to the rhythmical subtlety, reminiscent of the English Metaphysicals, in the line:

'E'n poca terra ho il cor chiuso e sepolto',

and again, immediately after the light-footed line:

'Ritardo o ingombra il tuo spedito corso'

in the arresting words:

'Io grave d'anni agghiaccio'.

This may not be great poetry, but it is certainly not stilted or affected. It is a simple statement of a real experience. And that also applies to much of the poetry of Vittoria Colonna's great friend, Michelangelo Buonarotti. For example, in a well-known poem, addressed to Vittoria, he compares himself to the first model that the sculptor shapes in worthless material, before entrusting his ideas to the more valuable stone. Then he goes on:

'Simil di me model nacqu'io da prima,
Di me model per opra più perfetta
Da voi rinascer poi, donna alta e degna'.
('First I was born a model of my self
That later, as a perfect work of art
You, gracious lady, might create me new'.)

'Da voi rinascer poi, donna alta e degna':

this is tightly packed and allows the words 'alta e degna' to emerge with Dantesque force and dignity. The Victorian critic J. A. Symonds described Michelangelo's poems as 'ungrammatical, rude in versification, crabbed or obscure in thought'; this inevitably reminds us of the former stock judgment on Donne.

III.

It is time for us to return to the Cortegiano. Our enquiry into Bembo's life and work has enabled us to perceive some fundamental flaws in the polite and glittering world of Urbino. The philosophy of these courtiers, we cannot help concluding, was a lie; sensual pleasure, so far from being despised, was in fact the main-

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spring of their lives. And more than that: not only was there a gulf between ideal and reality (there always is), but the ideal itself is highly questionable. This is not to suggest that good manners and conviviality are to be despised. But here they became divorced from life which, after all, is not a permanent sherry-party. Castiglione's courtier, and Bembo in particular, is the true precursor of a cultural type well-known among the educated classes of our own day: the sophisticated dilettante constantly searching for amusement, as if to conceal from himself and from the world his inner emptiness. (A good translation of *Il Cortegiano* might be: *The New Statesman*). The conception of 'courtesy' itself, so far from being enriched by the *Courtier*, became in face debased. It lost the fuller meaning contained for example in Dante's unforgettable line: 'O anima cortese Mantovana' (Inf. II, 58: Beatrice's address to Virgil), or again in a significant sentence from Dame Julian of Norwich: 'Our curtes Lord will that we ben as homley with him as herte may thinke or soule may desiren'. Courtesy, in those contexts, denotes a quality of the soul.

It is not surprising to find that Castiglione is unaware of the more serious functions of art. Poetry, he lays down, should be practised by the courtier because of the enjoyment that it brings to himself and because 'he shall by this means never want pleasant entertainments with women which ordinarily love such matters'. One may also be a little sceptical about the Cortegiano's appreciation of other arts. True, Raffael and Michelangelo are mentioned with approval, but in music homophonic songs to the viol or lute are preferred to the much more valuable polyphonic works of the period, which include the best works of Josquin de Près, one of the greatest composers of all times. The Cortegiani may have applauded, but cannot have understood, Michelangelo's intensely serious and self-sacrificing striving after artistic perfection.

Much of the courtiers' conversation in Castiglione's book turns on problems of language, and it must be admitted that in this connection some common sense is put forward. One of the main questions concerns the use of archaic words; after a very long argument the following sensible view seems to carry the day: 'The good use of speech ariseth of men that have wit, and with learning and practice have gotten a good judgment, and agree to receive the words they think good, which are known by a certain natural judgment, and not by any artificial rule'. But one of the contributions to the discussion deserves special mention: 'Words', says Bernardo Bibbiena, 'that are no more in use in Florence do still continue among the men of the country, and are refused of the gentlemen for words corrupt and decayed by antiquity'. This hint is not taken up by the company; once again we must turn to Bembo for a view that was undoubtedly taken for granted by the courtiers of Urbino.

In his long and very influential treatise 'Della Volgar Lingua' Bembo makes a clear distinction between the language of the courtiers ('la Cortegiana lingua') and the language of the people

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('quell altra che rimane in bocca del popolo'). He leaves us in no doubt about his view that, in poetry at least, popular language has to be avoided: 'Do you believe', he writes, 'that Petrarca could have written such beautiful, such exquisite, such noble poems in the language of the people? You are wrong if you believe that'. (It is characteristic that Dante is not mentioned in this context). The Cortegiano's poetry, it is clear, has to rely on the poetic diction provided by the refined 'lingua Cortegiana'.

This linguistic question provides us with the most convenient transition from the Italian Renaissance to its English counterpart. The *Cortegiano* exercised a great influence in England; Bembo's Petrarchism was much imitated; many Englishmen become thoroughly Italianate (to the pious horror of the traditionalists). But we know that the greatest writers of the English Renaissance did not despise the popular language; they made in fact constant use of the traditional idioms and the speech-rhythms of the people. Ben Jonson demands that the poet's language, though it 'differ from the vulgar somewhat, shall not fly from all humanity'. And in fact Jonson's English, as L. C. Knights reminds us, 'is not "polite"; it is, very largely, the popular English of an agricultural country'. Bembo would have condemned as unrefined such lines as these of Wyatt's:

> 'They flee from me, that sometime did me seek
> With naked foot stalking in my chamber'.

And much of Shakespeare and Donne he would have regarded as utterly barbarous.

This attitude has all too often been echoed by English critics. Here, for example, is what the Victorian critic Richard Garnett had to say, in 1898, of England's relation to Italy: 'A little while yet, and it would be needful to look beyond Alp and sea for the true Italy, and find her in Shakespeare, Spenser, and Sidney'. The lumping together of these names is still quite customary, and the search for the 'true Italy' has not been abandoned yet. This 'search' is, of course, connected with major issues which F. R. Leavis has often discussed: the cult of 'form' and 'style'; the inflated reputations of Spenser and Milton; Tennyson's ambition 'to bring English as near to the Italian as possible'; the whole question, in fact, of the English poetical tradition—all this is involved. For my present purpose I must confine myself to the following statement of the case. The culture of Castiglione's Italy tended to remain esoteric and precious; its leaders formed, on the whole, an artificial and self-conscious group. The people have no place at all in the Cortegiano's scheme of things. In the English Renaissance, on the other hand, many successful attempts were made to combine refinement with genuinely popular culture; its greatest achievements, as well as many of the minor ones, reflect the experiences and problems of a great people with its roots in the remote past. Tradition was being challenged by a new spirit, but the response often combined elements of both.

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One of the earliest works of the English Renaissance is itself an interesting counterpart to Castiglione's *Cortegiano*: it is Sir Thomas Elyot's *Book of the Governor* (published in 1531, three years after Castiglione's work). *The Governor*, according to Elyot, is the man who bears any authority in the state, from the local magistrate upwards, and Elyot's book discusses the qualities and formation of that man. Here, for example, is what Elyot wishes his 'governors' to consider on appointment to office: 'First, and above all thing, let them consider that from God only proceedeth all honour, and that neither noble progeny, succession, nor election be of such force, that by them any estate or dignity may be so established that God being stirred to vengeance shall not shortly resume it, and perchance translate it where it shall like him . . . They shall not think how much honour they receive, but how much care and burden . . . Let them think the greater dominion they have, that thereby they sustain the more care and study. And that therefore they must have the less solace and pastime, and to sensual pleasures less opportunity'. The moral seriousness of Elyot's approach is borne out by the context of his thought. He was a follower of Erasmus—'the famous Erasmus', as he says, 'whom all gentle wits are bound to thank and support'. Erasmus' own ideal of the good life, though different from Elyot's 'vita activa", is yet nearer to it than to the world of Castiglione—the ideal of a life lived in serious intercourse with friends, simple yet civilized, beautiful yet devout. Elyot was also a friend of Thomas Moore—the man who tried to combine the Erasmian life with the duties of a 'governor'. It was in Thomas More's circle that the foundations were laid of the characteristically English contribution to the Renaissance. Thomas More was a courtier, certainly, and he was open to new influences, but he was also firmly rooted in the popular culture of the Middle Ages. This emerges clearly from the following vivid scene contained in one of his religious treatises—a death-bed scene which owes nothing to the polish of Urbino:

'Have ye not ere this', writes More, 'in a sore sickness, felt it very grievous to have folk babble to you, and especially such things as ye should make answer to, when it was a pain to speak? Think ye not now that it will be a gentle pleasure, when we lie dying, all our body in pain, all our mind in trouble, our soul in sorrow, our breast all in dread while our life walketh awayward, while our death draweth toward, while the devil is busy about us, while we lack stomach and strength to bear any one of so manifold heinous troubles, will it not be a pleasant thing to see before thine eyes and hear at thine ear a rabble of fleshly friends, or rather of flesh flies, skipping about thy bed and thy sick body, like ravens about thy corpse, crying to thee on every side: "What shall I have? What shall I have?" Then shall come thy children and cry for their parts; then shall come thy sweet wife, and where in thine health haply she spake thee not one sweet word in six weeks, now shall she call thee sweet husband and weep with much work and ask thee "what shall she have"; then shall thine executors ask

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for the keys, and ask what money is owing thee, ask what substance thou hast, and ask where thy money lieth. And while thou liest in that case, their words shall be so tedious that thou wilt wish all that they ask for upon a red fire, so thou mightest lie one half-hour in rest'.

In the course of the sixteenth century the smooth Italian sonnets and the accomplishments of the Cortegiano reached England. The court of 'Gloriana' modelled itself on the famous company of Urbino, and many of its members wrote the appropriate sonnets. Like the Italian courts, their English counterpart proved all but irresistible to many of the potential leaders of culture; we need only remind ourselves what a fascination the Court exercised over such great men of letters as Donne, Bacon, and George Herbert.

Apart from this alluring court-world (a world of seemingly autonomous secular values) there existed an older world in the parish-communities all over the country, in many a gentleman's household, in schools and vicarages, in guilds and fraternities. This was a world of traditional morality, a world where religion (no doubt, intermingled with superstition) tended to be taken seriously; in all essentials a mediæval world. One of its aspects has recently been symbolized by T. S. Eliot in a passage which significantly incorporates some lines from Sir Thomas Elyot's *Book of the Governor*:

> '. . . In that open field
> If you do not come too close, if you do not come too close,
> On a summer midnight, you can hear the music
> Of the weak pipe and the little drum
> And see them dancing around the bonfire
> The association of man and woman
> In daunsinge, signifying matrimonie—
> A dignified and commodious sacrament.
> Two and two, necessarye coniunction,
> Holding eche other by the hand or the arm
> Whiche betokeneth concorde'.

Here was the home of the popular tunes and the racy idioms; here also the awareness, however dim and inarticulate, of a supernaturally sanctioned natural order which man could violate only at the price of his undoing. This was an all-embracing order: all spheres of life (politics, economics, sexual relations, etc.) were within its orbit. It was this order which most of the artists and thinkers of the period assimilated in their youth. During their lives they came to experience the conflict between the two co-existing worlds.

We cannot pursue this subject in the present context. Perhaps we can just venture the suggestion that this complexity is among the causes of the dramatic and polyphonic nature of the best works of the English Renaissance. L. C. Knights has analysed this complexity in the case of Ben Jonson and has pointed to the co-existence in Jonson's work of a 'naïve delight in splendour' with a 'clear-

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sighted recognition of its insignificance judged by fundamental human, or divine, standards'. The greatest artists of the English Renaissance were able to transcend the world of the *Cortegiano* and to achieve a critical attitude towards it. Only by a process of transfiguration, as in *The Winter's Tale*, could the courtiers remain part of a comprehensive order.

'Order': the great speech of Ulysses springs to mind. It is, of course, the 'locus classicus' for the Elizabethan conception of hierarchy. But Shakespeare himself presents to us another aspect of this conception in a delightful scene in *The Winter's Tale* (V, 2):

> '*Clown* (to Autolycus): You denied to fight with me this other day, because I was no gentleman born: see you these clothes? say, you see them not and think me still no gentleman born: you were best say these robes were not gentleman born. Give me the lie, do, and try whether I am not now gentleman born.
>
> *Autolycus*: I know you are now, sir, a gentleman born.
>
> *Clown*: Ay, and have been so any time these four hours.
>
> *Shepherd*: And so have I, boy.
>
> *Clown*: So you have: but I was a gentleman born before my father: for the King's son took me by the hand and called me brother; and then the two kings called my father brother; and then the prince my brother and the princess my sister called my father father; and so we wept: and there was the first gentleman-like tears that ever we shed'.

In Shakespeare we find both: hierarchy and equality; unlike the courtiers of Urbino, he refused to be taken in by the pretensions of the gentleman born or made. Perhaps we are entitled to say that only a combination of hierarchy and equality can prevent either of them from being idolised. Both of them were occasionally combined even at the court of Elizabeth; this may have been a survival from earlier, homelier times. 'At a solemn dancing', we are told in Selden's *Table Talk*, 'first you had the grave measures, then the corantoes and the galliards, and this is kept up with ceremony; at length to trenchmore and the cushion-dance, and then all the company dance, lord and groom, lady and kitchen-maid—no distinction'. And once again we can turn to Sir Thomas Elyot's *Governor* for confirmation. 'A public weal', he lays down at the beginning of his treatise, 'is a body living, compact or made of sundry estates and degrees of men'. But he also insists that a gentleman is made 'of no better clay . . . than a carter, and of liberty of will as much is given of God to the poor herdman as the great and mighty emperor', and he tells his 'governor': 'Thy dignity or authority, wherein thou only differest from others, is (as it were) but a weighty or heavy cloak, freshly glittering in the eyes of them that be purblind'. 'Dres't in a little, brief authority'; no more than that.

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It may be that here we have come across one of the two common-places of the English Renaissance. It was of course a mediæval heritage—here is Langland's statement of it: 'For all we are Christ's creatures, and of his coffers rich, And brethren as of one blood, as well beggars as earls'. A member of Ben Jonson's and Falkland's circle, John Hales of Eton, expressed it in very similar terms: social differences between men, he taught, could not derive any support from Christianity, 'for we have believed him that hath told us "In Jesus Christ there is neither high nor low" '. (Hales, *Works*, I, 131). In the 1640's shriller voices were to echo this gentle scholar, but there is no reason to believe that the Levellers' creed ('the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live as the greatest he') was new when it was expressed during the Civil War.

When the social critics and reformers from More onwards, inveigh against the evils of their age, they appealed to an underlying idea of equality which, in an important sense, outweighs all inequalities without obliterating them. Paradise was traditionally noted for the absence of gentlemen; so was the Golden Age; and 'state of nature' and 'status innocentiæ' seem to have merged into one. A specifically English version of the Golden Age was represented by the image of pre-Conquest England. The well-known anti-Normanism of some Civil War radicals was not without precedent: many of the Elizabethan chroniclers, for example, were surprisingly anti-Norman. 'Primitivism', in one form or another, was a good antidote against the claim of the ruling class for adulation.

Perhaps it was partly because of all this that so many of the works of the English Renaissance are both 'refined' and 'popular'. It will now be apparent that 'refinement' and 'popularity' are not, as is often believed, mutually exclusive; it may well be that the vitality of a civilization depends on a certain balance between them. However that may be, we are perhaps allowed to conclude from our survey that the good manners and social graces of the *Cortegiano* must not be too readily identified with the real civilization of the Renaissance. The great achievements of that civilization transcend the court-world in every way, and there is a sense in which they came about not because, but in spite, of the polished society that assembled in Urbino and in all the other would-be Urbinos of that age.

WILHELM SCHENK.

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MILL, BEATRICE WEBB AND THE 'ENGLISH SCHOOL':

PREFACE TO AN UNPRINTED VOLUME

JOHN STUART MILL'S essays on Bentham and Coleridge, may, I suppose, properly be described as classical. Yet are they, for the literary student at any rate, in real and active recognition classical? I, personally, never heard of them when I was reading for the English Tripos at Cambridge, and I don't remember ever to have come across any direction to them in any of the 'authorities' that offer to guide the literary student through the nineteenth century. Yet it is more important that he should have read them than he should have read, say, *Sartor Resartus* or *Unto this Last*. But if it should, by some chance, have occurred to him to read them he wouldn't, unless he had luck, have found them very accessible. There they are, in Volume I of the old Victorian *Dissertations and Discussions*, and no doubt it is as well that he should turn over the set of volumes in some library, and see what other topics Mill disserts upon and discusses. But if anywhere—and it certainly should often be so—any number of students should be wanting to read those two key essays at the same time (for purposes of discussion, for instance, or concerted written work), there would be a good deal of frustration. For the reprint of *Dissertations and Discussions* brought out in Routledge's 'Universal Library' is unobtainable (unless *d'occasion*), and students cannot go to the bookshop and buy their copies of the required texts in any form—texts that should be widely possessed and generally accessible.

This present volume represents an ambition to make Mill's *Bentham* and *Coleridge* current classics for the literary student. But there was more to the actual operative purpose that moved me than this suggests, and 'for the literary student' doesn't, without some explaining, really convey my intention. And in the explaining I have to avow that, essentially, I have been concerned to take a propagandist opportunity. I have been concerned to do something more by way of promoting that particular approach to the problem of liberal education which I outlined in *Education and the University*. I contend there that while, on the one hand, if the study of literature is to play its central part it must be informed and governed by a more athletic conception of criticism as a discipline of intelligence than it commonly is, on the other a serious study of literature inevitably leads outwards into other studies and disciplines, into fields not primarily literary, and that the problem

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of liberal education at the university level, the particular discipline being duly provided for, is to exploit this outward-leading to the best advantage. A liberal education cannot confine itself to the critical study of literature, and the profit of a real literary-training will show itself very largely in other-than-literary fields. It is with the means of cultivating and relating these fields that a serious attempt to grapple with the problem must be very largely preoccupied.

This insistence on extra-literary studies may seem superfluous, the need being recognized in time-honoured and universal academic practice. My point is that my preoccupation with vindicating the study of literature as—what it so rarely is—a real discipline (and one without which there can be no real liberal education) carries with it, in the nature of things, a more exacting preoccupation with extra-literary studies than academic practice anywhere bears witness to. In the English Tripos, for instance, with which my own work has been associated, the 'period' papers which the candidate has to take are headed *Literature, Life and Thought*. But no one should suppose from this that candidates for the English Tripos will have been guided through courses of work planned in the interests of an extended and unified understanding of any period or any part of it—or anything at all. It means merely that, if an odd candidate, in picking, after a study of back papers, the minimum safe number of topics on which to acquire so much knowledge as will show to advantage in a half-hour's to an hour's unloading, decides in favour of one coming under 'Life and Thought', he can count, if he is judicious and moderately lucky, on finding his opportunity. It will be a very unusual and fortunate student who has the grasp, the energy and the character to make it anything else. Most will not even glimpse what else it might and should be.

And if we ask how anything better is to be arrived at, the answer is that nothing substantially better can, under a system that for guidance leaves the student, for the most part, to lectures, and reckons to test his quality by an end-of-course stand-and-deliver against the clock. Study under such a system inevitably tends to be an acquiring and arranging of *cliché*-material. The academic authorities believing in such a system will tend to take as their first-class man a type that may be described as the complete walking *cliché*—the man (it's often a woman) who unloads with such confident and accomplished ease in the examination-room because he has never really grappled with anything, and is uninhibited by any inkling of the difference between the retailing of his amassed externalities and the effort to think something out into a grasped and unified order that he has made his own. Those who like this type will recruit themselves from it, and will inevitably tend to dislike, and as a student undervalue, the man who makes them uncomfortable by implicitly challenging their standards, their competence and their self-esteem: the system is disastrous and self-perpetuating. So the 'academic mind' comes to deserve its depressing reputation.

I have suggested in *Education and the University* what, in an

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'English School' that is really designed to promote the development of mature, energetic and creative minds, will replace the reliance on lectures and examinations. I am not proposing to recapitulate here my account of the methods of study-group, organized discussion and 'pieces of work' that seem to me, in their general lines, necessary conditions of any promising attack on the problem. But —and that is why I refer to my account of them—assumed by me as the right or ideal conditions, they are there as an implicit context in the suggestions I make below. Not that I think that except where these ideal conditions obtain nothing is worth attempting. Opportunities far from ideal are worth making the most of, and it is out of experience of such that my suggestions come. Whenever, for instance (it is a good one for demonstrative purposes), one is faced with directing, as part of a much wider 'English' course, a study of the Victorian age, one can profitably ask oneself how such a study can be best approached and best organized. What are the likeliest lines for promoting, not the usual ready and confident superficiality of the 'good student', but that conscious and intelligent incompleteness which carries with it the principle of growth; not the canny amassing of inert material for the examination-room, but the organization that represents a measure of real understanding, and seeks of its very nature to extend and complete itself.

The opportunity I was endeavouring to make the most of when I thought of these two essays of Mill's, and of the reasons for making them more accessible, was a paper on George Eliot and her 'setting' instituted for Part II of the English Tripos. A paper for Part II, the student being relatively mature, with a good deal of reading behind him, and some measure of real study in the given field being presumably expected by the examiners, affords a better opportunity than any 'Life and Thought' licence in Part I—opportunity for experiment that may nevertheless have bearings on work in less favourable conditions. 'Setting', presumably, meant something more than the immediate intellectual and cultural environment as given in the books on George Eliot; an environment that, if it is to be worth serious study, must be related to a much wider context: in fact, we seemed committed to a pretty general study of the Victorian background and (to change the metaphor) to attempting some sort of charting of the main currents.

In helping students to tackle such an enterprise one looks for the approach that promises to educe most readily the lines of significant organization—the main lines on which most things in the whole complex field can be most significantly related. Such help is peculiarly necessary where the Victorian age is concerned. The student is very unlikely to have brought any very useful notions of how to proceed from his earlier literary studies. A man who has taken Part I of the English Tripos will know something of Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold, Newman, Macaulay and other representative figures, but (and this seems to me a damning comment on the system) unless he is very exceptional he will not know how to push further in pursuit of an ordered understanding without a prohibitive

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waste of time and energy. And—as, in my experience, the keenest and most competent searchers have verified—you may go through (say) Oliver Elton's *Survey of English Literature 1830-1880* without acquiring any better notion of how to deepen, extend and organize into real knowledge and understanding your smatterings and adumbrations.

It isn't, then, very helpful to suggest to your students that they should for a start, with the help of Elton's *Survey* and Trevelyan's *British History in the Nineteenth Century* sketch a rough chart of the field, marking the main features and outlining the main currents. They need more specific suggestions if they are to get their bearings in the age and establish their axes of reference. And surely the first obvious suggestion is that, of all the Victorian figures they are already acquainted with, Matthew Arnold, because of the peculiar quality of his intelligence and the peculiar nature of his relation to his time, will repay special study in a way no others will; a suggestion to which the extremely useful book on him by Mr. Lionel Trilling,[1] lying to hand, gives the greater force. But something further is needed, a complementary focal line, and here it is that Mill presents himself as meeting the case ideally.

In the first place, of course, it is his 'Bentham' and his 'Coleridge' that propose themselves: once they are thought of, their due status as key documents is indisputable. To begin with, the two subjects are the key figures that Mill so convincingly exhibits them as being. The essays are devoted to justifying the attribution of significance that he makes in the earlier of them, that on Bentham (1838):

> 'There are two men, recently deceased, to whom their country is indebted not only for the greater part of the important ideas which have been thrown into circulation among its thinking men in their time, but for a revolution in its general modes of thought and investigation . . . The writers of whom we speak have never been read by the multitude; except for the more slight of their works, their readers have been few: but they have been the teachers of the teachers; there is hardly to be found in England an individual of any importance in the world of mind, who (whatever opinions he may have afterwards adopted) did not first learn to think from one of these two; and though their influences have but begun to diffuse themselves through these intermediate channels over society at large, there is already scarcely a publication of any consequence addressed to the educated classes, which, if these persons had not existed, would not have been different from what it is. These men are, Jeremy Bentham and Samuel Taylor Coleridge—the two great seminal minds of England in their age'.

But Bentham and Coleridge are not only, in actual history, the key and complementary powers by reference to which we can

[1] *Matthew Arnold*, by Lionel Trilling (Allen and Unwin).

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organize into significance so much of the field to be charted; even if they had had no great influence they would still have been the classical examples they are of two great opposing types of mind:

> 'It is hardly possible to speak of Coleridge, and his position among his contemporaries, without reverting to Bentham: they are connected by two of the closest bonds of association—resemblance and contrast. It would be difficult to find two persons of philosophic eminence more exactly the contrary of one another. Compare their modes of treatment of any subject, and you might fancy them inhabitants of different worlds. They seem to have scarcely a principle or a premise in common. Each of them sees scarcely anything but what the other does not see. Bentham would have regarded Coleridge with a peculiar measure of the good-humoured contempt with which he was accustomed to regard all modes of philosophizing different from his own. Coleridge would probably have made Bentham one of the exceptions to the enlarged and liberal appreciation which (to the credit of *his* mode of philosophizing) he extended to most thinkers of any eminence, from whom he differed'.

And as we follow Mill's analysis, exposition and evaluation of this pair of opposites we are at the same time, we realize, forming a close acquaintance with a mind different from either—the mind that appreciates both and sees them as both necessary, generalizing the necessity in these terms:

> 'For among the truths long recognized by Continental philosophers, but which very few Englishmen have yet arrived at, one is, the importance, in the present imperfect state of mental and social science, of antagonistic modes of thought: which, it will one day be felt, are as necessary to one another in speculation, as mutually checking powers are in a political constitution. A clear insight, indeed, into this necessity is the only rational or enduring basis of philosophical tolerance; the only condition under which liberality in matters of opinion can be anything better than a polite synonym for indifference between one opinion and another'.

Mill's is itself, as these essays sufficiently evidence, a very distinguished mind. To read them with close attention is an educative experience. This is true as it is not true, for example, of *Biographia Literaria*, that academic classic which is habitually prescribed for study as an initiating and enlightening document. Mill's essays deserve to be called classical for their intrinsic quality; they are models of method and manner. Coleridge was a genius, but his writings cannot be said to be products of a disciplined mind. Mill's pre-eminently are, and they have an intellectual distinction that is at the same time a distinction of character. And the rigorous training that issues in such apparently easy mastery doesn't mean narrowness or dryness. The desiccating rigours and narrownesses of Mill's own education are, of course, notorious; he describes them

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himself in the *Autobiography*. But, as the describing shows, he derived from them a kind of profit that had not entered into the intention behind them, so that when he defines Bentham's limitations his phrases represent something more than the 'vague generalities' of vaguely general recognition:

> 'Nobody's synthesis can be more complete than his analysis. If in his survey of human nature and life he has left any element out, then, wheresoever that element exerts any influence, his conclusions will fail, more or less, in their application'.
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> 'He had a phrase, expressive of the view he took of all moral speculations to which his method had not been applied, or (which he considered the same thing) not founded on a recognition of utility as the moral standard; this phrase was "vague generalities". Whatever presented itself to him in such a shape he dismissed as unworthy of notice, or dwelt upon only to denounce as absurd. He did not heed, or rather the nature of his mind prevented it from occurring to him, that these generalities contained the whole unanalysed experience of the human race'.
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> 'In many of the most natural and strongest feelings of human nature he had no sympathy; from many of its graver experiences he was altogether cut off; and the faculty by which one mind understands a mind different from itself, and throws itself into the feelings of that other mind, was denied him by his deficiency of Imagination'.
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> 'How much of human nature slumbered in him he knew not, neither can we know. He had never been made alive to the unseen influences which were acting on himself, nor consequently on his fellow-creatures . . . Knowing so little of human feelings, he knew still less of the influences by which those feelings are formed: all the more subtle workings both of the mind upon itself, and of external things upon the mind, escaped him; and no one, probably who, in a highly instructed age, ever attempted to give a rule to all human conduct, set out with a more limited conception either of the agencies by which human conduct *is*, or of those by which it *should* be, influenced'.

Mill, then, for all the restrictive rigours of his father's educational experiment shows that he has a sensitive intelligence, informed by introspective subtlety, wide perceptions and a lively historical sense. The pupil of James Mill, and the self-styled Utilitarian, can write the classical appreciation of Coleridge and of the kind of reaction he stands for against that eighteenth century which is characterized with such admirable trenchancy in the Coleridge essay:[2]

> 'It was natural that a philosophy which anathematized all that had been going on in Europe from Constantine to Luther, or even to Voltaire, should be succeeded by another, at once a

[2]'No one can calculate what struggles, which the cause of improvement has yet to undergo, might have been spared if the philosophers of the eighteenth century had done anything like justice to the Past'.

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> severe critic of the new tendencies of society, and an impassioned vindicator of what was good in the past. This is the easy merit of all Tory and Royalist writers. But the peculiarity of the Germano-Coleridgian school, is, that they saw beyond the immediate controversy, to the fundamental principles involved in all such controversies . . . They thus produced, not a piece of party advocacy, but a philosophy of society, in the only form in which it is yet possible, that of a philosophy of history; not a defence of particular ethical or religious doctrines, but a contribution, the largest yet made by any class of thinkers, towards the philosophy of human culture'.

The thinker who could write these complementary appreciations of the two great opposites might call himself Utilitarian, and avow that in respect of the philosophical issue he stands with Locke as against the transcendentalists, but he was clearly no unqualified Benthamite. In fact, as we know, he spent his life in a strenuous endeavour, pursued with magnificent integrity, to justify his contention that the Benthams and the Coleridges, 'these two sorts of men, who seem to be, and believe themselves to be, enemies, are in reality allies': the side from which he inevitably worked having been determined by his upbringing, he worked indefatigably to correct and complete Utilitarianism by incorporating into it the measure of truth attained by the other side. And here we come to a third main point, for our purpose, about these essays of Mill's: the essayist is not merely a distinguished mind of a different type from Bentham or Coleridge; he is a great representative figure in Victorian intellectual history, and the essays lead on to the *Autobiography*.

Mill's *Autobiography* is a classic that every cultivated person should have read, though very few candidates for Honours in English do, I think, read it. It is certainly a main document for us. The account of the young Mill's early training (and the consequent spiritual crisis) for which it is best known—a *locus classicus* of great significance in any case—has itself a direct bearing on the central themes of the essays and what should be central themes in any study of the Victorian age. The account of his intellectual life that forms the body of the book is an immediately relevant piece of Victorian history that, by reason of the contacts and connexions it records, lends itself peculiarly to the business of educing significant organization in the whole complex field.

Reading, in the account of the Philosophic Radicalism in which Mill made his *début*, of the early *Westminster Review*, we recall that George Eliot became virtual editor of that same review—for there is a continuity, in spite of the vicissitudes of its history—a quarter of a century later. And the connexion is a significant one: George Eliot was never a Benthamite, and the *Westminster Review* she edited was no longer the special organ of Philosophic Radicalism, but her succession in the line leading back to Mill may fairly serve as a reminder that the atmosphere of the intellectual milieu to which she belonged—a milieu very central to the Victorian

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age—was in a general sense Utilitarian. Mill himself, of course, by that time, was only in a very qualified sense a Utilitarian—or his Utilitarianism was a very different thing from that which he had received from his father. And the hospitality towards new contacts that played so large a part in his development out of pure Benthamism into something pretty much in resonance with George Eliot's unsystematized liberalism shows itself, as recorded in the *Autobiography*, very early.

There was Carlyle, of whose writings he says:

> 'What truths they contained, though of the very kind which I was already receiving from other quarters, were presented in a form and vesture less suited than any other to give them access to a mind trained as mine had been. They seemed a haze of poetry and German metaphysics, in which almost the only clear thing was a strong animosity to most of the opinions which were the basis of my mode of thought; religious scepticism, utilitarianism, the doctrine of circumstances, and the attaching any importance to democracy, logic, or political economy' (p. 148, 'World's Classics' edition, to which the other page-references apply also).

But

> 'I did not seek and cultivate Carlyle less on account of the fundamental differences in our philosophy' (p. 149).

We may at first be surprised at his more than tolerance—his respect, and wonder what such a mind could learn from such an opposite. But it *is* respect, and not deference;[3] he exhibits a true and wholly admirable humility that is at the same time a tenacity in working along his own arduous path:

> 'I did not, however, deem myself a competent judge of Carlyle. I felt that he was a poet, and that I was not; that he was a man of intuition, which I was not; and that as such, he not only saw many things long before me, which I could only, when they were pointed out to me, hobble after and prove, but that it was highly probable he could see many things which were not visible to me even after they were pointed out'.

While this pre-eminently disciplined thinker, a trained logician and analyst, cannot report any particular view or change of view that he owes to Carlyle, he is conscious that that total sense of things—of human experience and the problems implicit in it—upon which analysis operates, and which conditions the analytic process, has responded in some way to Carlyle's imaginative heat and stress.[4]

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[3]See *The Impulse to Dominate*, by D. W. Harding; p. 209 ff.

[4]*Cf.* 'Directly, Carlyle contributed little: but the atmospheric effect of his insistence on personality, immaterial values, and leadership was immense'. G. M. Young, *Victorian England*, p. 55 (footnote)—This book is of great value in suggesting themes and for filling in background.

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And here the student gets his hint as to the kind of attention Carlyle is worth. It is hard at this date to realize why Carlyle in his own time should have been felt to be so great and profound an influence, and it is bad economy to direct the student in the ordinary way to study him as a key figure of the age. A tenacious inquirer may waste many of his too few hours before deciding that from the great mass of Carlyle's writings no coherent doctrine or system of thought or body of wisdom can be extracted. If Carlyle is to get some attention (and this fairly represents the kind he is worth to the literary student in general), it might reasonably be given by way of an essay on the debt the young Mill may be imagined to owe him.

Of another early contact the effects were overt and indisputable, that which began in

> '1828 and 1829, when the Coleridgians, in the persons of Maurice and Sterling, made their appearance in the Society as a second Liberal and even Radical party, on totally different grounds from Benthamism and vehemently opposed to it; bringing into these discussions the general doctrines and modes of thought of the European reaction against the philosophy of the eighteenth century'.[5]

This refers us back, of course, to the two essays. But it also adds very notably to the system of significant relations. For with Maurice, Christian Socialism and Arnold of Rugby appear on the map, and though (aided by the irresponsible Stracheyan *procédé*) we tend to let the ethos of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* stand for Thomas Arnold, his son has much closer affinities with him than is commonly supposed. So we establish a line running from Coleridge and the German historical critics through Thomas to Matthew Arnold, thus connecting the last—as there is point in doing—with his father's Broad Church liberalism.[6]

If Utilitarianism may be said to have pervaded the intellectual atmosphere in George Eliot's time, so, with equal truth, may Comtism, that most developed expression of the characteristic tendency of the age to replace supernatural religion by the service of humanity. The two are brought together in Mill, who, coming on Comte while extending his acquaintance with the Saint-Simonians (it was before 1830), formed a sustained interest in him, and was a pioneer in getting him known in this country. Mill, of course, never swallowed Positivism whole, and his objections to the system amounted, in essence, to George Eliot's. A great novelist can never be tempted to see a deified Society as the supremely real thing in

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[5] *Autobiography*, 'World's Classics' edition, p. 108. The other page-references are to this edition.

[6] A line very relevant to George Eliot's development: in fact, for the understanding of her intellectual and religious background, L. Trilling's *Matthew Arnold* provides a valuable supplement to Leslie Stephen's *George Eliot*.

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relation to which the individual is insignificant,[7] and Mill's individualism was based on grounds of which George Eliot must have approved: Tocqueville (by whom, with so many of his contemporaries, he was profoundly impressed)[8] confirmed his strong sense of the need to safeguard, not only the rights, but the individuality, of the individual against the pressure of a democratic civilization. To preserve and foster variety seemed to him of ultimate importance, and he feared the drive of democratic conditions towards uniformity.[9]

On the other hand, as we go on in the *Autobiography*, we see the original Benthamite individualism modifying itself radically. 'Bentham's idea of the world', he says in the essay on Bentham, 'is that of a collection of persons pursuing each his separate interest or pleasure, and the prevention of whom from jostling one another more than is unavoidable, may be attempted by hopes and fears derived from three sources—the law, religion, and public opinion'.[10] And a much more positive conception of society on his own part is implied in his appreciation of Coleridge. Even at the stage at which he can call himself a Socialist his thinking is still that of a mind for which the individual is the prior fact; he works out from that to the idea of society, and doesn't seem to arrive at any very full inward recognition of the complexities covered by the 'individual-society' antithesis. Yet the development is a sufficiently remarkable one. The individualist, son and pupil of James Mill, refining and deepening his liberalism,[11] comes in the eighteen-forties to avow himself a Socialist:

> 'In short, I was [had been] a democrat but not the least of a Socialist. We were now much less democrats than I had been, because so long as education continues to be so wretchedly imperfect, we dreaded the ignorance and especially the selfishness and brutality of the mass: but our ideal of ultimate improvement went far beyond Democracy, and would class us decidedly under the general designation of Socialists. While we repudiated with

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[7]The reader of George Eliot's fiction will have noted many reflective passages the implications of which bear as critically on Comtism as on Utilitarianism. See, *e.g.*, *Janet's Repentance*, Chapter xxii.
[8]See the essay on him in *Dissertations and Discussions*, Vol. I.
[9]See p. 214-15.
[10]'One critic divided the rising generation into fluent Benthamites and muddled Coleridgians. S.T.C. once said to Miss Martineau: "You seem to regard society as an aggregate of individuals". "Of course I do", she replied. There is much history implicit in that encounter, and by 1850 Coleridge had won'. *Victorian England*, p. 68 (footnote).
[11]'In this third period (as it may be termed) of my mental progress, which now went hand in hand with hers, my opinions gained equally in breadth and depth, I understood more things, and those which I had understood before, I now understood more thoroughly'. *Autobiography*, p. 194.

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> the greatest energy that tyranny of society over the individual which most Socialistic systems are supposed to involve, we yet looked forward to a time when society will no longer be divided into the idle and the industrious; when the rule that they who do not work shall not eat, will be applied not to paupers only, but impartially to all; when the division of the produce of labour, instead of depending, as in so great a degree it now does, on the accident of birth, will be made by concert on an acknowledged principle of justice; and when it will no longer either be, or be thought to be, impossible for human beings to exert themselves strenuously in procuring benefits which are not to be exclusively their own, but to be shared with the society they belong to' (p. 196).

—It is a development that gives, in its classically representative way, a most important part of the intellectual history of the nineteenth century.

By great good luck there lies ready to the student's hand—or should lie there—a book that, in a way not less deserving to be described as classically representative, carries on from much the point at which Mill's *Autobiography* stops. This is Beatrice Webb's *My Apprenticeship*. I doubt whether the full distinction of Mrs. Webb's autobiography is yet generally recognized. The special political and personal associations that gained it immediate currency as a kind of documentary classic, the life's record of a notability whose life has been an important part of recent history, have tended, I think, to promote something less than a full recognition. *My Apprenticeship* is one of the classics of English literature: to say this is perhaps not merely otiose.

It is much richer in interest than Mill's *Autobiography*. The formative experience of Mrs. Webb's early life was much richer. Her childhood was not an educational experiment, and she suffered nothing like the restrictive and starving intellectuality of Mill's upbringing. And as she describes her childhood, its milieu and its conditions, we recognize in the writer a potential novelist. In fact, it is not merely because she is a gifted and highly intellectual woman that, for all the differences of circumstances, she reminds us of George Eliot. She too is decidedly a woman, earnest, strong in sympathetic imagination, and religiously given beneath all the liberal convictions of her intellect. Less easily intellectual, perhaps, than George Eliot, she canalizes her earnestness finally in intellectual disciplines, and achieves her justifying work in a very different field from that of imaginative art. Yet in her initial drives and potentialities she is more like George Eliot than the distinctive achievements of the two women suggest.

Her account of her family and its antecedents is a representative piece of nineteenth-century social history:

> 'The family in which I was born and bred was curiously typical of the industrial development of the nineteenth century. My paternal grandfather, Richard Potter, was the son of a York-

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shire tenant farmer who increased the profits of farming by keeping a general provision shop at Tadcaster; my maternal grandfather, Lawrence Heyworth, belonged to a family of "domestic manufacturers" in Rossendale in Lancashire, the majority of whom became, in the last decades of the eighteenth century, "hands" in the new cotton mills. Evidently my grandfathers were men of initiative and energy, for they rose rapidly to affluence and industrial power, one as a Manchester cotton warehouseman, the other as a Liverpool merchant trading with South America. Nonconformists in religion, and Radicals in politics, they both became, after the 1832 Reform Act, Members of Parliament, intimate friends of Cobden and Bright, and enthusiastic supporters of the Anti-Corn Law League. My father graduated in the new London University, of which my grandfather, as a leading Unitarian, was one of the founders' (p. 2).[12]

Both grandfathers, we see, had been ardent Cobdenite Radicals. 'But I doubt whether my father was ever a convinced Radical, and some time in the 'sixties he left the Reform Club and joined the Carlton'. Appropriately, he was a financier and company-promoter, prominently occupied in the railway-development of North America. His daughter describes the opulent rootlessness of their lives:

> 'The same note of perpetual change characterized our social relationships . . . The world of human intercourse in which I was brought up was in fact an endless series of human beings, unrelated one to another, and only casually connected with the family group—a miscellaneous crowd who came into and went out of our lives, rapidly and unexpectedly. Servants came and went; governesses and tutors came and went; business men of all sorts and degrees, from American railway presidents to Scandinavian timber growers, from British Imperial company promoters to managers and technicians of local works, came and went; perpetually changing circles of "London Society" acquaintances came and went; intellectuals of all schools of thought, religious, scientific and literary, came and went; my elder sisters' suitors, a series extensive and peculiar, came and went, leaving it is true, in the course of my girlhood, a permanent residue of seven brothers-in-law, who brought with them yet other business, professional and political affiliations, extending and diversifying the perpetually shifting panorama of human nature in society which opened to my view. Our social relations had no roots in the neighbourhood, in vocation, in creed, or for that matter in race; they likened a series of moving pictures—surface impressions without depth—restlessly stimulating in their glittering variety. How expressive of the circumstance of modern profit-making machine enterprise is now its culminating attempt to entertain the world—the ubiquitous cinema!'

[12]The page-references given here are to the library edition (Longmans). The work was once obtainable in the 'Pelican Books'.

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Brought up in such a milieu, the 'career' that faced her as the normal one for a good-looking young woman of her class was marriage, and the kind of socially more or less functionless life that is called 'social'. Her account of her struggle, among the pressures and temptations of the environment, to escape such a life ('Dissipation doesn't suit me, morally or physically') and find a vocation is a classical document of certain essential characteristics of human nature that have played an enormous part in history, but not in the 'class' theories of culture of recent fashion. The home itself was not Philistine; in fact, the first part of *My Apprenticeship* serves as a most effective reminder of the actual concrete complexities simplified in Matthew Arnold's threefold classification, which (like Arnold's methods in general) had its point and its efficacy because there was a public capable of appreciating it—one, that is, not exhaustively describable as Philistine or Barbarian. The household of the successful Victorian company-promoter abounded in cultural interests and intellectual stimulus—to distracting excess, even, it might be suggested. This is a characteristic note:

> 'And whether we girls took down from the well-filled library shelves the *Confessions of St. Augustine* or those of Jean Jacques Rousseau, whether the parcel from Hatchett's contained the latest novels by Guy de Maupassant and Emile Zola or the learned tomes of Auguste Comte or Ernest Renan; whether we ordered from the London Library or from Mudie's a pile of books on Eastern religions, or a heterogeneous selection of what I will call "yellow" literature, was determined by our own choice or by the suggestion of any casual friend or acquaintance. When we complained to my father that a book we wanted to read was banned by the libraries: "Buy it, my dear", was his automatic answer'.

Such a milieu, whatever its shortcomings, was not Philistine. And, for all the suggested heterogeneity of the interests and influences, there were predominant positive characters manifested in the sum of them: the company-promoter's home, in fact, gives us representative glimpses, not of Victorian Philistinism, but of Victorian intellectual culture in the period of George Eliot's established glory:

> 'In the particular social and intellectual environment in which I lived, this stream of tendencies culminated in Auguste Comte's union of the "religion of humanity" with a glorification of science, in opposition to both theology and metaphysics, as the final stage in the development of the human intellect. And once again I note that the reading of books was in my case directed and supplemented by friendly intercourse with the men and women most concerned with the subject-matter of the books. As a student I was familiar with the writings of the most famous of the English disciples and admirers of Auguste Comte. I had learnt my lesson from George Henry Lewes. I delighted in John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography*, and had give to his *System of Logic* and *Principles of Political Economy* an assiduous though somewhat

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strained attention. Above all, the novels of George Eliot had been eagerly read and discussed in the family circle. But I doubt whether my sister Margaret and I would have ordered from the London Library all the works of Comte himself if it had not been for a continuously friendly intercourse with the Frederic Harrisons . . . '

The great friend of the family and frequenter of the house—'philosopher on the hearth'—was Herbert Spencer, and it was he above all others who encouraged the young aspirant and initiated her into the disciplined life of the mind. As for the nature of his influence:

> 'He taught me to look on all social institutions exactly as if they were plants or animals—things that could be observed, classified and explained, and the action of which could to some extent be foretold if one knew enough about them'.

The pupil who 'reminded him of George Eliot' (p. 29) provided her own corrective to an influence of this kind, for if she resembled the great novelist it was not merely in the intellectual grasp and stamina that so impressed Spencer; she was profoundly and imaginatively interested in the individual life,[13] and, as she herself notes (and as much in her book confirms), she might herself have been a novelist:

> 'From my diary entries I infer that, if I had followed my taste and my temperament (I will not say my talent), I should have become, not a worker in the field of sociology, but a descriptive psychologist; either in the novel, to which I was from time to time tempted; or (if I had been born thirty years later) in a scientific analysis of the mental make-up of individual men and women, and their behaviour under particular conditions'.[14]

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[13]' . . . although I realised the value of physical science as a training in scientific method, the whole subject-matter of natural science bored me. I was not interested in rocks and plants, grubs and animals, not even in man considered merely as a biped, with the organs of a biped. What roused and absorbed my curiosity were men and women, regarded—if I may use an old-fashioned word—as "souls", their past and present conditions of life, their thoughts and feelings and their constantly changing behaviour'.

[14]She goes on: 'For there begin to appear in my diary, from 1882 onwards, realistic scenes from country and town life, descriptions of manners and morals, analytic portraits of relations and friends—written, not with any view to self-education, as were my abstracts, extracts and reviews, but merely because I enjoyed writing them. It is, however, significant that these sketches from life nearly always concern the relation of the individual to some particular social organisation; to big enterprise, or to Parliament, to the profession of law, or of medicine, or of the Church'.

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The passage (p. 119) in which she elaborates the point that 'Something beyond keen intellectual faculty is necessary to the psychologist and sociologist' might have been written by George Eliot:

> 'Therefore I solemnly dedicate my energies for the next five months to the cultivation of the social instincts—trusting that the good dæmon within me will keep me from all vulgarity of mind, insincerity and falseness. I would like to go amongst men and women with a determination to know them; to humbly observe and consider their characteristics; always remembering how much there is in the most inferior individual which is outside and beyond one's understanding. Every fresh intimacy strengthens the conviction of one's own powerlessness to comprehend fully any other nature, even when one watches it with love. And without sympathy there is an impassable barrier to the real knowledge of the inner workings which guide the outer actions of human beings. Sympathy, or rather *accepted* sympathy, is the only instrument for the dissection of character. All great knowers and describers of human nature must have possessed this instrument. The perfection of the instrument depends no doubt on a purely intellectual quality, analytical imagination—this, again, originating in subjective complexity of motive and thought. But unless this latter quality is possessed to an extraordinary degree, insight into other natures is impossible, unless we subordinate our interest in self and its workings to a greater desire to understand others. Therefore the resolution which has been growing in my mind is, that I will fight against my natural love of impressing others, and prepare my mind to receive impressions. And as fast as I receive impressions I will formulate them, thereby avoiding the general haziness of outline which follows a period of receptivity without an attempt of expression' [MS. diary, February 22, 1883].

The relation between this and such notes as the following, in which (with references to the inadequacies of such 'disciplined explorations of the varieties of human experience' as claimed academic recognition—psychology, and so on) she describes her attempts to train herself in observation and analysis, is obvious, as is the bearing of all these parts of *My Apprenticeship* on the importance of literary studies as, not self-sufficient, but central to a properly conceived liberal education:

> 'For any detailed description of the complexity of human nature, of the variety and mixture in human motive, of the insurgence of instinct in the garb of reason, of the multifarious play of the social environment on the individual ego and of the individual ego on the social environment, I had to turn to novelists and poets . . . '

That a literary training, involving its proper discipline of intelligence (for there is one), would be very relevant to the essential qualifications of psychologists and sociologists—this is a contention the

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grounds for which are pretty plainly hinted at in such texts as these from *My Apprenticeship*. Correlatively, they hint at the ways in which, in a university English School as it should be, literary studies would lead outside themselves into other fields and other disciplines.

Beatrice Potter's kind of interest in the individual life, her novelist's interest in the concrete, also helped to save her from any bondage to her mentor's individualism. For Spencer, so far from countenancing Mill's kind of development towards Socialism, made, in *Man versus the State*, his protest against all compromise. That the author of *First Principles* should, in spite of his generalizing preoccupations with Biology, Psychology and Sociology, have been able to persist in an extreme individualism is a tribute to the strength of the Utilitarian tradition. No doubt the promptings of his essential influence, followed up, were themselves calculated to lead his pupil to take less atomistic views of the relations between the individual and society. But the gifts that made her so unlike her teacher, and more like George Eliot than he most likely appreciated, must have speeded her escape from *laissez-faire*. The intelligence that recognized so clearly the rôles of sympathy and imaginative insight, and that turned for the best instruction in 'the complexity of human nature' and 'the multifarious play of the social environment on the individual ego, and of the individual ego on the social environment' to the poets and the novelists couldn't have rested in Utilitarian individualism, or, contemplating slump-induced misery, have shared the simple faith of *The Times*: 'There is no one to blame for this; it is the result of Nature's simplest laws!'

But the student in making this point will perhaps be aware of a certain irony as he thinks of the characteristic modern development with which her life's-work—that devoted life's-work (so different from a novelist's) in which she found her vocation—is associated. Certainly it is in a peculiarly suggestive way that her account of her apprenticeship brings together for his contemplation the unchastened individualism of the world into which she was born and that endless growth in the range and complexity of state organization and bureaucratic control which makes the individual feel so helpless and so insignificant in the modern world. The life's-work for which Spencer inaugurated the training ended in *Soviet Communism: A New Civilization*. ('Its organisational structure is surely the most complicated known to political science'—[the Preface]).

Spencer was not the only presence in the home, or the most intimate, of *laissez-faire* individualism—the pure, conscious and uncompromising creed. Here is Mrs. Webb's account of her mother:

> 'An ardent student of Adam Smith, Malthus, and particularly of Naussau Senior, she had been brought up in the strictest sect of Utilitarian economists. In middle life she had translated some of the essays of her friend Michel Chevalier, who represented the French variant of orthodox political economy, a variant which caricatured the dogmatic faith in a beneficent self-interest. And

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> my mother practised what she preached. Tested by economy in money and time she was an admirable expenditor of the family income: she never visited the servants' quarters and seldom spoke to any servant other than her own maid. She acted by deputy, training each daughter to carry out a carefully thought-out plan of the most economical supply of the best-regulated demand. Her intellect told her that to pay more than the market rate, to exact fewer than the customary hours or insist on less than the usual strain—even if it could be proved that these conditions were injurious to the health and happiness of the persons concerned—was an act of self-indulgence, a defiance of nature's laws which would bring disaster on the individual and the community. Similarly, it was the bounden duty of every citizen to better his social status; to ignore those beneath him, and to aim steadily at the top rung of the social ladder. Only by this persistent pursuit by each individual of his own and his family's interest would the highest general level of civilization be attained. It was on this issue that she and Herbert Spencer found themselves in happy accord. No one of the present generation realises with what sincerity and fervour these doctrines were held by the representative men and women of the mid-Victorian middle class. "The man who sells his cow too cheap goes to hell" still epitomises, according to John Butler Yeats, "the greater part of the religion of Belfast"—that last backwater of the sanctimonious commercialism of the nineteenth century'.

Against this background the force of mind and character represented by Mill's development become more fully appreciable.

Of course, Mrs. Potter's rigid orthodoxy and Mill's intellectually strenuous modification do not exhaustively represent the Utilitarianism of the Victorian age, if we are to talk of Utilitarianism as having been pervasive. And this is the point at which to suggest that the postulated study-group ought to sketch for itself in brief the history of Utilitarian thought and its influence. Perhaps, as a measure of economy, a tough and efficient reader or two might be detailed to extract from Halévy's *Growth of Philosophic Radicalism* for the benefit of the group the main points about the origins of Benthamism. For Bentham, of course, brought together a great deal of representative thinking, and an account of his affiliations and connexions is a large part of the intellectual history of the eighteenth century. The history as given by Halévy is loaded with names, English and French, but our deputed inquirers could without great difficulty elicit the main lines and elements. In particular they would note the coming together of what is represented by the name of Adam Smith with what may be represented by the name of Newton. Not that Newton himself contributed directly to Benthamism in the way in which Adam Smith did; I am thinking of the ambition to do for human nature and human affairs what the immortal Newton, hailed as the great typical genius of the new physical science, had done for astronomy.

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This ambition, we know, forms a characteristic accompaniment of the Benthamite ethos. Literary students—ours are literary in the first place—will have come on it in the work of Dr. I. A. Richards; work that ought to be seen—even by literary students—in its relation to the tradition it belongs to. Approached in the way suggested, the offered psychological criticism of *The Principles of Literary Criticism*, in fact, is likely to strike them as curiously contemporary with Bentham. In the later phase, that represented by *Coleridge on Imagination*, the ambition takes a subtler form. The cue for the book itself, our students will note, was given by Mill's pronouncement about Bentham and Coleridge in the essay on the latter: 'Whoever could master the premises and combine the methods of both, would possess the entire English philosophy of their age'. They will note too that Dr. Richards's way of combining is to 'restate Coleridge in terms of Bentham', and perhaps they will go on to judge that this is a very different process from that to which Mill devoted his life;[15] a very different kind of thing from Mill's endeavour to modify crude Benthamite Utilitarianism into something fully consonant with an appreciation of Coleridge. They are likely, I think, to judge with some emphasis that the effect of 'restatement' is to *replace* Coleridge by Bentham.

I am here, of course, expressing my own view[16] (which at some time, in such radical matters, one is bound to do). And I will add further that the approach I have been indicating conduces, I think, to a due precipitation of the suspicion that the subtleties of Semasiology clothe an essentially Benthamite spirit—Benthamite in a field in which to be Benthamite is to be indifferent to essential elements in the problems one offers to be tackling. Certainly (it seems to me) Basic English exemplifies the practical spirit of Benthamism—'It can teach the means of organizing and regulating the merely *business* part of the social arrangements, Mill says[17]—applying itself to

[15]What more is needed concerning Mill's development will be found very accessible in Leslie Stephen's *The English Utilitarians*, Vol. III: *John Stuart Mill*.

[16]It will be found expressed at length in an examination of *Coleridge on Imagination* that appeared in *Scrutiny* for March, 1935 (Vol. III, No. 4).

[17]And more fully: 'If Bentham's theory of life can do so little for the individual, what can it do for society?

'It will enable a society which has attained a certain state of spiritual development, and the maintenance of which in that state is otherwise provided for, to prescribe the rules by which it may protect its material interests. It will do nothing (except sometimes as an instrument in the hands of a higher doctrine) for the spiritual interests of society; nor does it suffice of itself even for the material interests. That which alone causes any material interests to exist, which alone enables any body of human beings to exist as a society, is national character . . . All he can do is but to indicate means by which in any given state of the national mind,

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matters where its indifference to essential human interests that are involved is calculated to have, for those interests, disastrous consequences.

Whether these judgments are wholly endorsed or not, it is an important line of intellectual history that comes up with them. Adam Smith's name brings up the relation of Utilitarianism to social, economic and political history. The historical significance of the *laissez-faire* individualism that counts for so much in the Utilitarian tradition is plain enough: a society in whch the classes associated with the expanding capitalist enterprise of eighteenth-century England represented the stir of new energy naturally tended to see government, identified as it was with the persisting paternal and mercantilist habits of the vestigial old order, social and economic, as mainly an obstructive and interfering nuisance, and to favour a minimal conception of it. Mill in his *Coleridge* says:

> 'The State, again, was no longer considered, according to the old ideal, as a concentration of the force of all the individuals of the nation in the hands of certain of its members, in order to the accomplishment of whatever could be best accomplished by systematic co-operation. It was found that the State was a bad judge of the wants of society; that it in reality cared very little for them; and when it attempted anything beyond that of police against crime, and arbitration of disputes, which are indispensable to social existence, the private sinister interest of some class or individual was usually the prompter of its proceedings . . . Government altogether was regarded as a necessary evil, and was required to hide itself, to make itself as little felt as possible. The cry of the people was not "help us", "guide us", "do for us the things we cannot do, and instruct us, that we may do well those which we can"—and truly such requirements from such rulers would have been a bitter jest: the cry was "let us alone". Power to decide questions of *meum* and *teum*, to protect society from open violence, and from some of the most dangerous modes of fraud, could not be withheld; these functions the Government was left in possession of, and to these it became the expectation of the public that it should confine itself'.

But the significance in relation to social and economic history of Bentham's thought is a great deal wider than can be suggested by referring to Adam Smith and *laissez-faire*. Mill, in the essay on him, gives it in a general way here, in discussing him as the 'great questioner of things established':

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the material interests of society can be protected; saving the question, of which others may judge, whether the use of those means would have, on the national character, any injurious influence'.

The whole passage deserves pondering in relation to Matthew Arnold's preoccupations.

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'Who, before Bentham (whatever controversies might exist on points of detail) dared to speak disrespectfully, in express terms, of the British Constitution, or the English Law? He did so; and his arguments and his example together encouraged others. We do not mean that his writings caused the Reform Bill or that the Appropriation Clause owns him as its parent: the changes which have been made, and the greater changes which will be made, in our institutions, are not the work of philosophers, but of the interests and instincts of large portions of society recently grown into strength. But Bentham gave voice to those interests and instincts: until he spoke out, those who found our institutions unsuited to them did not dare to say so, did not dare consciously to think so; they had never heard the excellence of those institutions questioned by cultivated men, by men of acknowledged intellect; and it is not in the nature of uninstructed minds to resist the united authority of the instructed. Bentham broke the spell'.

For all that, Bentham was politically no Radical, but rather Tory-inclined for a great part of his life. It was James Mill who, in the early years of the nineteenth century, made Benthamism a political force, and identified Bentham with Philosophic Radicalism. The history of the central part played by Philosophic Radicalism in the movement of agitation, political education and organized pressure that led up to the Reform Act of 1832 is to be found in Halévy's book. There is no need here to suggest what other reading should be done in this connexion; suitable tips would be readily gathered in consultation with qualified authority[18] It is, however, in place to say that the members of our study-group, following their special focal interests through this critical period of English history, would be well disposed and sensitized for improving their general grasp of it.

The Reform Act once achieved, the common aim that had held together the heterogeneous forces combined to achieve it was gone. The class that had risen to assured political power had naturally no enthusiasm for further reforms—reforms, that is, tending towards the sharing of its privileges and the reduction of its power. Apart from Municipal Reform, in which, of course, they were very much concerned, the one great distinctive achievement of the Philosophic Radicals consequent upon the act was, significantly, the new Poor Law, symbolic embodiment of all that was most rationally and righteously inhuman in orthodox Utilitarianism, with its implacable Malthusian logic. Utilitarianism, in fact, provided the sanction for the complacent selfishness and comfortable obtuseness of the

[18] *William Cobbett* by G. D. H. Cole, and *The Life of Francis Place*, by Graham Wallas, oughn't in any case to be missed. Cobbett, it may be said here, should be a more substantial value for the 'English' student than he commonly is, and any specially designed 'English' library should contain his works.

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prosperous classes in the great age of Progress: they were protected by righteous rationality from the importunities of imaginative sympathy. We have had an illustration of the creed held simply and sincerely, and so in a sense respectably, in Mrs. Webb's account of her mother. The supreme document in creative literature, where Victorian Utilitarianism and its part in Victorian civilization are in question, is *Hard Times*, with the grim play of its title. This masterpiece, as I have argued elsewhere, offers itself as a key work for the critical study of fiction. Taking stock of its superiority in the Dickensian *œuvre* as a work of art, the critic finds himself considering those aspects of the Victorian world which exercised so strong a compulsion upon Dickens's creative powers, and controlled them, for once, to a profound and sustained seriousness of response. The close relations between literary criticism and extra-literary studies invited in the appreciation of *Hard Times* need, then, no insisting on; the general nature of the opportunity is plain.

Here I will only note that Gradgrind and Bounderby give us, in significant association, two aspects of Victorian Utilitarianism. In Gradgrind, as in Beatrice Webb's mother, it is a matter of principle; a serious creed, if a repellent one. But Gradgrind consorts freely and uncritically with Josiah Bounderby—marries his daughter to him, in fact. And Bounderby is 'rugged individualism' in its most gross and brutal forms. Yet Gradgrind is represented as a kind of James Mill, a stern and practical theorist, who gives his children, from intellectual conviction, an education like that suffered by his son, and recorded in the *Autobiography*. And the justice of this vision of the tendency of James Mill's kind of Utilitarianism, as manifested in later history, can hardly be questioned.

But the Utilitarianism of the Victorian age was something more than a matter of Bounderby, Gradgrind and John Stuart Mill. What may fairly be called a Utilitarian ethos was pervasive, and can be found in representative figures who would not have called themselves Utilitarians. Is is not there, for instance, in Macaulay, the critic of James Mill? The student might ponder this question, while looking through the third chapter of the *History*[19] (considering, perhaps, along with it Chapter VI of Firth's *Commentary on Macaulay's History of England*).

This, then, is the kind of field that co-ordinates itself round John Stuart Mill, approached in the way suggested. For the other main figure—that to be set over against Mill—I have already proposed Matthew Arnold as the obvious choice. Set study of Carlyle or Ruskin, for instance, would be bad economy. What Carlyle[20]

[19]The essay by Matthew Arnold on Falkland in *Mixed Essays* might well be read in conjunction with this. (Arnold, of course, has in various places some very useful characterizing references to Macaulay). Here too would be a good place to introduce H. Butterfield's *The Whig Interpretation of History* (along with which should be read *The Interpretation of History* by A. J. Woolford in *Scrutiny*, Vol. XIII, No. 1).

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stands for—or against (it is apt to seem mainly that)—can be summarized fairly briefly, voluminous as he is. Ruskin's destructive analysis of the orthodox political economy was a great and noble achievement, entitling him to enduring honour, but it can be worth few students' while to follow it through at any length in the original documents: it is fairly easy to say what his place and significance are.[21] Arnold, on the other hand, cannot be summarized. I say this with an eye, not on his weaknesses and inconsistencies as a thinker, but on his essential strength. And here we have a reason for his being worth special study. He is not easy to do justice to, and to attempt it seriously is to refine one's understanding of the nature of intelligence. For, though he is in so many ways so unlike Mill, he too stands for intelligence (as the contrast with Carlyle brings out). Unlike Mill, he is not a systematic thinker, he represents no strict intellectual discipline, he doesn't go in for sharpness and completeness of analysis or full and clear statement of principle, and he is not preoccupied with consistency. This might seem to leave little that can be claimed for him—a conclusion, by all appearances, that has been pretty widely entertained, though he has contrived to command attention and remain a live author as Carlyle, I think, has not, and Ruskin has not.

The difficulty of being fair to him, a difficulty that every one interested in him must have experienced, is illustrated at the most distinguished level by Mr. T. S. Eliot in *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*. It is illustrated in a much less respectable way by Raleigh, whose essay in *Some Authors* should be known to the student as a *locus classicus* for the unscrupulous and silly malice, revealing a radical dislike of live intelligence, that so often goes with a reputation for 'brilliance' in the academic mind.[22] It is illustrated with honest and forthright crudity in another essay the student might well look at: that by J. M. Robertson in *Modern Humanists Reconsidered*. The obtuseness manifested in the march of Robertson's relentless logic has a clear relation to his demand for an equivalent logic in Arnold. And here we have the clue to the general unfairness from which Arnold has suffered: he has been judged by inappropriate criteria, as if he offered what he doesn't, and as if a critic who fails of logical rigour and strictness of definition

[20]Leslie Stephen's essay on him in *Hours in a Library*, Vol. III, is very good, and J. M. Robertson's in *Modern Humanists Reconsidered* is worth looking up, as is his essay on Ruskin.

[21]J. A. Hobson's *John Ruskin* is to be recommended. B. E. Lippincott's *Victorian Critics of Democracy* (Oxford University Press) dealing with Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold and others, will be found very useful.

[22]It is significant that Robert Bridges, whose performance as friend and editor of Gerard Manley Hopkins so notably exemplifies the 'academic mind', should refer to Arnold as 'Mr. Kidglove-Cocksure', for which show of animus he is rebuked by Hopkins (*The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, XCVII).

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is left with no respectable function of intelligence that he might be performing.

The flexibility, the sensitiveness, the constant delicacy of touch for the concrete in its complexity, the intelligence that is inseparably one with an alert and fine sense of value—these qualities, however severe the criticism to be brought against him, are exemplified by Arnold; and it is the reader of literary critical training who should find them a challenge to appreciation. Such a student will recall that in the essay, *The Function of Criticism*, it is more than the function of literary criticism that is being discussed; it is the general function of critical intelligence in a civilized community: Arnold is defining a function that extends the habit, the methods and the qualifications of a good literary critic to the more general field. Our postulated student, who is to bring with him the training of a literary critic, may profitably inquire how far and in what ways Arnold's writings exemplify such an extension.

And this brings me to a final emphasis on the intention of these notes: the student, I repeat, is in the first place a student of literature. I am assuming that at the centre of the work here in view there will be a critical study of the novels of George Eliot, and I have been trying to suggest the kind of work—the approach, the development and the organization—that should, I think, replace that represented (to take an instance in front of me) by the prescription for 'special study' of the English novel over two or three Victorian decades—a usual kind of prescription that seems to me radically and wastefully misconceived.

F. R. LEAVIS.

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'THE TEMPEST'

WHETHER *The Tempest*, which we may assume to have been written immediately after *The Winter's Tale*, is or is not a more satisfactory play is a question about which opinions may reasonably differ. What seems certain is that it represents a further and logical development in the 'symbolic' technique evolved in the series of Shakespeare's last comedies. We might define this development by saying that, whereas *The Winter's Tale* is still concerned with the evolution of experience towards its completely adequate symbolic consummation, *The Tempest* assumes that this consummation has already been achieved, so that the various characters and situations exist from the first entirely in terms of their 'symbolic' function. The sense of motion and development which emerges from the earlier play, and which F. R. Leavis possibly had in mind when he referred some years ago in *Scrutiny*[1] to its 'organic' character, is no longer apparent in *The Tempest*. Its absence, although we may agree that it makes the play poorer in a certain human content, was the inevitable consequence of a great artist's inability to repeat himself; for *The Tempest* is, whether we prefer it or not, the logical conclusion of the integrating process that produced *The Winter's Tale* and consequently of Shakespeare's art.

The main outline of the 'symbolic' pattern of the play follows familiar lines. We should never forget, in this respect, that it is called *The Tempest*, and that it opens in a storm at sea. As in *The Winter's Tale* the storm, and the calm which follows it, are related respectively to the tragedy caused by human passion and the reconciliation which, after an acceptance of the suffering implied in that tragedy, follows upon repentance in its aftermath. At the centre of the action, formerly victim of the storm roused by unleashed human passion, but now as much its master as he is in control of the physical tempest he has raised to bring his enemies to the stage upon which their destinies are to be decided, stands the enigmatic figure of Prospero. At once the victim and the master of circumstances—and it is perhaps this double aspect of his nature which has proved, for many readers, the stumbling-block in the way of a full acceptance of the play—Prospero emerges increasingly, during the course of it, as the instrument of judgment. Through his actions, and those of Ariel, the different motives which prevail in his former enemies are brought to the surface, evaluated, and finally judged. In the process of judgment the meeting of Prospero's daughter with the son of Alonso provides a symbolic ground of reconciliation in the familiar Shakespearean manner. Only after the final restoration of harmony has taken place on the island does Prospero, with his restored associates, return to resume his part in

[1]April, 1942, p. 345.

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the human society from which envy and ambition had originally driven him.

I.

The true interest of the play, however, lies less in the conception thus stated in general terms, than in the working out of it in terms of experience. In Prospero's opening exposition to Miranda (I, ii), which is little more than a monologue, Shakespeare conveys facts which are necessary to the barest comprehension of what is going to happen; but he also, beyond this, prepares us for the interpretation, the symbolic significance of the events we are to witness. Prospero's first aim is the awakening to moral issues of Miranda. Although our understanding of this is, in the nature of things, gradual, the tone and phrasing of Prospero's first speech is in itself significant:

> There's no harm done . . .
> No harm.
> I have done nothing but in care of thee,
> Of thee, my dear one, thee my daughter, who
> Art ignorant of what thou art, nought knowing
> Of whence I am; nor that I am more better
> Than Prospero, master of a full poor cell,
> And thy no greater father.

Prospero's confidence, which stands out in the reiterated 'No harm done . . . No harm' as though he wished from the first to stress his perfect mastery of the situation, needs to be seen in contrast to Miranda's compassionate fear. Miranda, in her pity, is full of fear. Her fear, natural, attractive, human as it is, springs from her ignorance, from the same inexperience which led her imagination, in the opening speech of the scene, to imagine 'some noble creature' upon Alonso's ship and to live throughout with visions of a 'brave new world' and the enabled humanity that is to live in it. Prospero does not disapprove of these visions. Eventually he will endorse them, give them their proper place in his comprehensive view of spiritual reality; but, before this can be, they need to be reconciled to a fuller experience of the possibilities of human nature. It is the story of Florizel and Perdita over again. As their full happiness involved, as a preliminary condition, the breaking-up of the rustic paradise in which they first met, so must Miranda come to know 'what she is' in a way that can never be achieved in the isolation of the island. As a first step she must learn that life is not completely bounded by the relations of a father and a daughter happily contained within the limits of 'a full poor cell'. This 'cell' of retirement is itself a consequence of human sin, and the time has come for Miranda to know this and so to deepen her instinctive compassion by experience:

> 'T is time
> I should inform thee further.

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Miranda, in her compassionate helplessness, wishes herself 'a god of power' to pluck her still imaginary hero from danger; but Prospero—who is 'a god of power', at least in so far as fullness of understanding and the sanction of Destiny can make him one—deliberately wills a storm which is itself symbolically bound to the consequences of previous sin and which shall bring to his daughter, with the shadow of suffering, a more complete realization of what mature experience really means. That is why he is able to tell her 'I have done nothing but in care of thee' and that is why, in spite of all the suffering that seems to have been caused by the tempest, there has been 'no harm done'. No harm, but only the necessary prelude to a fuller and more complete life.

In the telling of the story which follows Miranda is, as it were, awakened into maturity. Piercing for her the dream which is her innocent life on the island, Prospero introduces her to wider possibilities. More properly speaking, by penetrating the veil which shrouds 'the dim backward and abysm of time' (and surely, in the charged mysteriousness of the phrase, we sense as much a reference to the universal human situation as to Miranda's particular position) he makes her aware of the knot of mingled motives which constitutes human society. The first thing she must learn, after so many years passed in the idyllic simplicity of Prospero's refuge, is her connection with another and more complex mode of life. As soon as she finds out that she has indeed had such a life, Miranda's question immediately brings out the moral issue:

> O, the heavens,
> What foul play had we, that we came from thence?
> Or blessed was't we did?

In this way Miranda raises a question which could never have occurred to her in the previous state of innocence and which lies at the heart of Shakespeare's conception. How can we justify, within Prospero's providential philosophy, the existence of an evil which seems to be indissolubly connected with normal behaviour? Prospero is ready with an answer which will require the unfolding of the full pattern of the play to give it force, but which already indicates the foundations of his confidence:

> Both, both, my girl.
> By foul play (as thou say'st) were we heav'd hence,
> But blessedly holp hither.

From the assertion that the fugitives were protected by providential action during their journey to the island it is only a short step to affirm that their exile itself was, spiritually speaking, a privilege. Evil, apparently inconceivable on the island—for Caliban's instincts are safely under control—has to be accepted in society as part of the necessary price of maturity. The reason, in fact, so far as we can see it—and Prospero's answer attempts to go no further—is in the opportunity it offers for the working out of a final state of 'grace'. We are not asked to accept this yet, so long

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before the end of the play; indeed it would be wrong to suppose that Shakespeare expects us to see in the use of the word 'blessedly' any more than a sign of Miranda's awakening to moral issues and a thread of conviction round which some kind of order may eventually gather. For the moment, in any case, Prospero's attention is primarily fixed upon expounding, still as a necessary step in Miranda's education, the nature of evil as revealed in the motives of his enemies.

Remembering previous plays we shall not be surprised to find, as we read the story of Prospero's expulsion from Milan, that evil in *The Tempest* has two aspects—personal and social—which stand in the closest connection with one another. All through the tragedies the first consequence of evil has been anarchy and its motive the overthrow of natural 'degree' by the dominating force of passion. 'Degree', in its turn, is associated with two human institutions, the family and the body politic. These institutions are based, in the widest sense of the word, upon reason and are the foundations of a civilized, moral way of living; and it is only when passion in the individual overcomes reason and aims at the destruction of these institutions that evil enters society. In the story of Prospero's expulsion evil strikes both at the roots of social stability—for the head of the state is the guarantor of that 'degree' by observing which alone man can live in society—and at the unity of the family to overthrow the natural order of things. In casting Prospero with his daughter on to the open sea Antonio transgressed both against the Duke of Milan and his own brother.

First against the Duke. The account given by Prospero of his dukedom reminds us insistently of the story of the Duke in *Measure for Measure*. Like that mysterious personage Prospero lived 'retired', withdrawn from the world and devoted entirely to contemplation and the 'liberal' arts:

> I, thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated
> To closeness, and the bettering of my mind
> With that which, but by being so retired,
> O'erprised all popular rate;

and, like the Duke, he delegated the whole of his power to another. In so doing both opened the way for the entry of evil into their respective dominions. Prospero is quite explicit about this when he tells Miranda that his own neglect of the worldly ends of government—

> in my false brother
> Awak'd an evil nature, and my trust,
> Like a good parent, did beget of him
> A falsehood in its contrary, as great
> As my trust was, which had indeed no limit,
> A confidence sans bound.

The similarity between Prospero and the Duke of Vienna, two characters separated as they are by several years of Shakespeare's

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most intense activity, is some indication of the continuity of spirit in which the plays were conceived. Both appear increasingly, as their stories are unfolded, to be in control of the events around them. Both, indeed, eventually attain a certain omniscience, even a reflection of divinity, which enables them finally to pass moral judgment upon those whose behaviour they have been observing throughout the play; but in each case this omniscience, this capacity to judge needs to be based on an understanding which has first been deepened by contact with reality. Prospero of course is more secure than the Duke in his mastery. His apprenticeship to experience has already been served before *The Tempest* opens and we hear of it now only as something in the past, whereas the Duke, conceived by Shakespeare before the process of deepening insight shadowed in the great tragedies had taken place, is still involved in his own search for clarification.[2] But the position of both is at bottom the same. Both begin by consecrating themselves to an ideal of purely personal perfection, and both in so doing neglect not only social duties but also an instrument, when properly conceived, for the attainment of that perfection itself. The position of Prospero, however, is complicated by an additional factor which points to the presence behind the play of the full tragic experience. Not only is his rule overthrown by that of a self-seeking usurper for whom the sacred guarantees of political 'degree' mean nothing, but the corruption which brings him suffering and loss springs from his own family.

At this point the political is replaced by the family issue. Prospero's own brother, who should have been his chief supporter by the most intimate personal ties, becomes—

> The ivy which had hid my princely trunk,
> And suck'd my verdure out on't.

Perhaps only the very intimacy of the ties which bind a man to his brother enable Antonio to assume a part so completely contrary to Prospero's own; the man of the world is, as it were, complementary to the contemplative precisely because of the unity of blood that unites them. To Antonio's crime against the state, against the sacred intangibility of 'degree', is added at all events a crime against the bond of unity in the family which Prospero feels even more deeply—

> I prithee, mark me, that a brother should
> Be so perfidious.

The two crimes are, in fact, one, a common subversion of the natural order of things, a descent into anarchy prompted by personal selfishness which is, in the Shakespearean outlook of the great plays, the supreme cause of tragedy. But Prospero himself, by his past

[2]We are told that he has always been 'one that, above all other strifes, contended specially to know himself' (*Measure for Measure*, III, ii).

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retirement, had helped unwittingly to bring these crimes about; and so only now, after helpless exposure to the tempestuous seas and years of confinement to a 'poor cell' on a most 'desolate isle'—desolate, in spite of all the graces with which his wisdom has endowed it, because deprived of human society—is he in a position to assume with full moral authority his vocation of judgment.

Beyond judgment, however, Prospero has yet another purpose—reconciliation. The old order, broken by the disruptive entry of passion into what had been the deepest of natural relationships, needs to be restored on the firmer basis provided by a wider experience. It is here that the process of Miranda's education links up with the play's more general 'symbolic' theme. The instrument of reconciliation, as in *The Winter's Tale*, is to be the love spontaneously born in the children of the very fathers whose friendship passion had destroyed: Ferdinand and Miranda can restore the happiness of their parents just because they have had no part in the sin which had brought about their tragedy. And so, still at the very beginning of the play—not, as in *The Winter's Tale*, at the end, for *The Tempest* concentrates our attention almost entirely upon the last, the reconciling stage in the tragic process—Miranda sees Ferdinand. Prompted still by her innocence, she greets him at once as something supernatural, the representative of a humanity exalted to something above the normal condition of man. Her first query is—

> What is't? a spirit?
> Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, sir,
> It carries a brave form. But 't is a spirit.

And when Prospero has explained that she is looking at a man, she continues with an even more explicit reference to divinity:

> I might call him
> *A thing divine*, for nothing natural
> I ever saw so noble.

The idea of *nobility* exalted to something like a state of divinity is fundamental to Shakespeare's purpose. It is, as we shall see, the conclusion towards which Prospero himself is moving; but the moment for accepting it has not yet come, and so he interrupts his daughter's ecstasy, breaks off the developing love, to which Ferdinand has responded at first sight, with what seems an inexorable brutality. Prospero's own explanation, in his aside—

> this swift business
> I must uneasy make, lest too light winning
> Make the prize light—

is indeed most perfunctory. No doubt Shakespeare thought it sufficient to allow events to explain themselves. The enriched poetic content of the final scenes of reconciliation will be sufficient, in due course, to show that Ferdinand's love for Miranda and hers for him have become deeper by being tested in the crucible of

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adverse experience. For the fact is that Miranda's idealization, *divinization* of Ferdinand, based though it is upon sound instincts, is still inadequate. Her reaction reflects a tenderness and compassion which are still insufficiently mature, still unsupported by an adequate depth of spiritual experience. She greets Ferdinand as a god simply because she has seen nothing like him before; and yet, as Prospero is quick to remind her, she has seen no other man than himself and Caliban. Her enthusiasm argues from a naïve belief that nothing wicked can inhabit so fair a form—

> There's nothing ill can dwell in such a temple:
> If the ill spirit have so fair a house,
> Good things will strive to dwell with it.

The religious associations called up by 'temple' and 'spirit' are significant and will eventually be taken up to form part of the final harmony; but they need first to be substantiated and confirmed by contact with human realities. Miranda herself unwittingly suggests that these realities are dangerous. Their outward form, even though it conceals something 'ill', may be so 'fair' that even 'good things' will be carried away and 'strive to dwell with it'. The behaviour of the men who have been cast ashore on the island by Prospero's providential storm—many of them presumably not much less god-like (at least potentially) than Ferdinand to Miranda's inexperienced gaze—will show how dangerous are her simple assumptions. Their behaviour calls for consideration in the main body of the play before Prospero's reconciling purpose can take mature shape. Only after his former enemies have done their worst and been, in turn, dominated by the superior power and insight of the man upon whose wronging their temporal good-fortune has so far depended will he be able to unite his daughter convincingly to Ferdinand in terms that are little short of god-like. But the divinity—such as it is—will then be founded upon a true experience of human nature and will express a spiritual reality, not merely a sentimental intuition; and this experience will have been obtained in the process of passing judgment on all the characters of the play.

II.

It is to pass judgment, indeed, as a prelude to reconciliation that Prospero has called all those concerned in his former banishment to be cast ashore on the island. From their first appearance (II, i) he subjects them to what is, in effect, an analysis of guilt. Having, at the beginning of the action, got them safely together he proceeds to differentiate carefuly between them; for some will turn out to be capable of redemption and others, in spite of his efforts, not. Their capacity is tested, above all, by their reactions to the ordeal to which they are exposed. Alonso, the King of Naples and—significantly—the character who has lost most in the wreck, comes best out of the test. Having lost, as he thinks, his son, and feeling that his journey to Tunis has been the cause of the whole

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disaster, he refuses from the first to be comforted. His only reply to Gonzalo's loquacious consolation is 'Prithee, peace'; and when Sebastian reproaches him with having brought by his project so much needless suffering to those around him he makes no attempt to deny this but merely points out that, if his be the greater part of the blame, he also bears the brunt of the suffering:

Sebastian: The fault's your own.
Alonso: So is the dear'st of the loss.

And it is just through the 'dearness' of his loss, since it has been fully assimilated through meditation in suffering, that the possibility of his redemption lies. In his refusal to be comforted Alonso is like the Leontes of the last Act of *The Winter's Tale*. To throw off sorrow in such a situation is to be insensible, and insensibility is perhaps in Shakespeare's mind at the time of writing these plays the greatest obstacle to redemption. Unlike Leontes Alonso does not really understand the reason for which this trial has been imposed upon him. He has forgotten, so it seems, his treatment of Prospero, but meanwhile the very inconsolable quality of his sorrow shows him to be capable of repentance; and Shakespeare no doubt intends to emphasize this quality in him when he makes him capable of receiving the symbolic visitation of sleep. Sleep, which deserted Macbeth after the murder of Duncan and which brought Lear to true self-knowledge, temporary happiness and the recovery of his reason, preserves in *The Tempest* its healing significance; and Prospero himself, acting through Ariel, bestows it upon those whose spiritual state is such that they can accept it. Alonso can do so because, as we have said, he is morally sensitive; and so his response to Ariel's music is a positive one:

> I wish mine eyes
> Would, with themselves, shut up my thoughts. I find
> They are inclined to do so.

Sebastian's comment in turn, insincerely proffered though it is, is in itself profoundly true to the Shakespearean intuition:

> Please you, sir,
> Do not omit the heavy offer of it:
> It seldom visits sorrow; when it doth,
> It is a comforter.

So Alonso sleeps in response to the invitation of the music, and his sleep is a sign that he will, when the time comes and his understanding has been completed, find his place in the final pattern of reconciliation.

The next stage in Shakespeare's analysis concerns Antonio and Sebastian. From the first, in the repartee to which they subject Gonzalo's efforts to cheer Alonso, they appear as cynics of the familiar Shakespearean type, their intelligence applied exclusively to purposes of destruction. When Adrian, otherwise insignificant,

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and Gonzalo speak of the island in terms that directly recall Banquo's account of Macbeth's castle at the moment of Duncan's arrival before it, their reaction is typical and, to those who appreciate Shakespeare's handling of detail of this kind, full of meaning:

Adrian: It (the island) must needs be of subtle, tender and delicate temperance . . . The air breathes upon us here most sweetly.

Sebastian: Ay as if it had lungs, and rotten ones.

Antonio: Or as 't were perfumed by a fen.

Gonzalo: Here is everything advantageous to life.

Antonio: True, save means to live . . .

Gonzalo: But the rarity of it is, which is indeed almost beyond credit . . . that our garments, being, as they were, drenched in the sea, hold notwithstanding their freshness and glosses, being rather new-dyed than stain'd with salt water.

Antonio: If but one of his pockets could speak, would it not say he lies.

The fresh sweetness of the air, the 'tender and delicate temperance' of the island are images of the kind generally associated, in the later plays, with the presence of 'grace'; while the fact, insisted upon more than once by Gonzalo, that immersion in the tempest-driven waters has left the garments of Alonso and his courtiers even fresher than they had been before, is perhaps more directly symbolic. However that may be, 'grace' in Shakespeare always has its enemy in the cynic, the destructive critic who belittles its intimations in terms of his own sensuality and reduces its value to worthlessness. In so doing he becomes the vehicle of the profound emotional disturbance which, taken together with the positive reaction against its implications, produced the great tragedies. Sebastian and Antonio, indeed, are no more than the successors of Iago. The grossness of their utterances, the evocation of 'rotten lungs' and the 'perfume' of the fen are typical inversions of the 'grace'-images of Adrian and Gonzalo, and the reference, coarsely physical, to Gonzalo's pockets is part of the same attitude. With no conception of value, divorced from that free reverence for the established order upon which any tolerable spiritual life must, according to Shakespeare, be based, the part of these two in *The Tempest* is necessarily destructive, anarchic; and that is why they, unlike Alonso, remain finally beyond the limits of Prospero's reconciling action.

Taken in itself, the cynicism shown by Sebastian and Alonso does not seem of great moment; but we are soon shown that it is the prelude to graver crimes. The moral anarchy fostered by the destructive intelligence does not confine itself to conceits and witticisms. As soon as Alonso, succumbing to the inspired harmony of Ariel, surrenders to the sleep which foreshadows forgiveness and the healing of his sorrows, they turn to plot against order and

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humanity itself. Shakespeare, indeed, explicitly stresses their wakefulness, their inability to receive or understand spiritual refreshment, in the wonder with which they comment on Alonso's drowsiness:

Sebastian: What a strange drowsiness possesses them!
Antonio: It is the quality of the climate.
Sebastian: Why
Doth it not then our eyelids sink? I find not
Myself dispos'd to sleep.
Antonio: Nor I, my spirits are nimble.

Immediately afterwards this 'nimbleness' of the critical faculty, this vivacity which reflects nothing more than anarchy, begins to translate itself into act. Prospero's enemy, who had conspired to eject him from his rightful position, feels himself once more dominated by the desire for power:

. . . methinks I see it in thy face,
What thou should'st be: the occasion speaks thee, and
My strong imagination sees a crown
Dropping upon thy head.

Antonio is not the first Shakespearean character whose 'strong imagination', envisaging a crime not yet apparent to an accomplice of weaker will, sees that accomplice crowned in anticipation of the future. Lady Macbeth, after seeing her husband crowned in her imagination, played in the death of Duncan very much the part played by Antonio in the plan to kill Alonso. Only in Antonio's case the presence of the 'rational' conviction that moral sanctions have no validity to restrain the ruthless following of self-interest is far more stressed and the inversion of natural values correspondingly more apparent. The plan to murder Alonso thrusts against both the institutions, the family and the crown, which Shakespearean symbolism invests with particular reverence: the family, founded upon the deepest, most instinctive ties of all, and the crown, upon the stability of which depends all possibility of holding off the ceaseless threat of anarchy which haunts human society. It is no accident that both the traitors in this play are brothers to those whom they plan to ruin. Antonio, the brother of Prospero who played the chief part in his banishment, and now Sebastian, stand in the same relationship of their victims; and both, in desiring to murder a king, are—like Macbeth—opening the gates to chaos.

One more point needs to be noticed in considering this plot. The two plotters are carefully distinguished in their characters. The difference between them is well put in their dialogue:

Sebastian: Well, I am standing water.
Antonio: I'll teach you how to flow.
Do so: to ebb
Hereditary sloth instructs me.

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Against Alonso, as previously against Prospero, Antonio is the arch criminal. It is he who provides the energy of the plot, who shows the active desire to destroy all that stands in the way of his personal advancement, who—in short—moves the relatively languid Sebastian to act. The speed with which his mind moves is conveyed in the very motion of his speech. When Sebastian doubtfully brings up the name of Claribel, we can feel the intensity of his thought in motion to dispose of an obstacle to his plans:

> She that is queen of Tunis; she that dwells
> Ten leagues beyond man's life; she that from Naples
> Can have no note, unless the sun were post,—
> The man in the moon's too slow,—till new-born chins
> Be rough and razorable.

The quick passage from idea to idea, the easy recourse to far-fetched, even grotesque comparisons ('Ten leagues beyond man's life', the 'man in the moon', 'unless the sun were post'), the interpolation of the phrase about the moon in the middle of another which itself leaps from the sun to 'new-born chins'—all this is thoroughly typical. The destructive energy of Iago, the same sense of keen intelligence at the service of the anarchic forces of passion, has descended to Antonio. That is why it is he, already the prime mover in Prospero's own banishment, who now, by inciting Sebastian to a similar crime, becomes his chief antagonist in the conflict of good and evil which is the real theme of *The Tempest*.

The resemblance with Iago is carried a step further in a most interesting passage from the same dialogue. Sebastian is slow to be convinced, almost as slow—and for much the same reasons of timidity and sheer incapacity to think clearly—as Roderigo in *Othello*. Somewhere at the back of his slow mind a doubt, an obscure formulation of conscience, is slowly working its way to the light. It expresses itself finally in reply to Antonio's eager pressing of him to seize the unique occasion which has offered itself:

> And how does your content
> Tender your own good fortune?

For Antonio the occasion capriciously offered by blind fortune is everything; that and the capacity to seize it by a decisive act of the will, to make one's 'content' fit with what chance has offered. More cynically, because more convinced of the senseless nature of the fluctuations of fortune, Antonio repeats the advice given by Lady Macbeth to her husband; still more significantly—and for similar reasons to be traced ultimately to a pessimistic interpretation of the value of human actions—his advice is substantially that given by Machiavelli to his Prince. Success depends on the seizing of occasions, and in practical affairs to succeed is the nearest approach to a categorical necessity. Only Machiavelli is not a cynic and his Prince is intended to have a purpose—that of saving Florence, and perhaps through Florence Italy, from the recurrent misery and degradation of foreign invasion; whereas Antonio has no aim, can

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conceive, indeed, of no possible aim, beyond personal advancement.

But Sebastian, slow as he is and—what is far worse—willing to be convinced, does not reply directly. His uncertainty finally expresses itself in an observation of whose profound meaning he is doubtless not completely aware:

> I remember
> You did supplant your brother Prospero.

Properly interpreted, this remark is something very like a warning. Antonio, who is now moving him to supplant Alonso, once acted himself against Prospero. Shakespeare does not, at this decisive moment in which Sebastian is choosing between good and evil, wish us to forget this fact. Partly because we are to bear in mind always that it is Antonio, Prospero's brother, who is the moving spirit in the evil of this play and that the real conflict is between him and his brother; but also for another reason. For what Sebastian is really trying to say is this: once the accepted bond of conscience has been broken by an act of usurpation, once the moral foundations of 'degree' have been undermined both in the individual and in the relationships of society, what is to prevent Antonio, should it serve his purposes, from turning upon the creation of his will? Once he has given his consent Sebastian is as likely as Alonso to be in danger. As in the case of Macbeth, one crime will tend to become the stepping-stone to another; there is no logical stopping-place between the first overthrow of 'degree' and the complete abandonment of the restraints imposed by conscience upon which all 'degree' is founded.

Antonio replies simply by pointing to his own success as a sufficient justification for his actions:

> True:
> And look how well my garments sit upon me,
> Much feater than before; my brother's servants
> Were then my fellows, now they are my men.

This, which is substantially the argument of Iago and, still more, of Edmund in his dismissal of 'legitimacy', ends by convincing Sebastian that the action which seems to offer him most hope of profit is also justified. But first he expresses his doubt a little more directly: 'But for your conscience?' The cynical energy of Antonio's reply reminds us still more immediately of Iago. The very word, as indicating any reality, is inconceivable to him:

> Ay, sir, where lies that? if it were a kibe,
> 'T would put me to my slipper: but I feel not
> This deity in my bosom: twenty consciences,
> That stand 'twixt me and Milan, candied be they,
> And melt ere they molest.

The opening image, with its reduction of conscience to a 'kibe', that is, to a purely physical inconvenience of the kind which alone Antonio can conceive, is pure Iago. So is the sneering reference

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to 'deity', a word which can mean nothing to him but a sentimental superstition intervening between a man and the furthering of those selfish ends in the attainment of which alone he feels his manhood. The sense of sentimental unreality is driven home by the references, common in Shakespeare and everywhere expressive of loathing, to 'candied' and 'melt'; the stomach of the strong, practical man of action revolts against these finicky attempts to restrict his progress. The speech continues, still reflecting the vivacity and liveliness of the speaker in its rhythm and expression:

> Here lies your brother,
> No better than the earth he lies upon,
> If he were that which now he's like (that's dead)
> Whom I, with this obedient steel, three inches of it,
> Can lay to bed for ever; whiles you, doing thus,
> To the perpetual wink for aye might put
> This ancient morsel, this Sir Prudence, who
> Should not upbraid our course. For all the rest,
> They'll take suggestion as a cat laps milk;
> They'll tell the clock to any business that
> We say befits the hour.

No one can deny Antonio's brilliance as a speaker. His words reflect the intense destructive energy of the man, energy to which his intelligence is bound in faithful service. They have vigour enough, and more, to move the sluggish Sebastian to his purposes. Behind them lies a deep-seated pessimism, the conviction that a dead man is 'no better than the earth he lies upon' and that only three inches of steel, 'obedient' to a will firmly determined to carry out its own selfish purposes, lie between his victim and utter extinction. If this is so, if there be no moral sanction governing our acts and if conscience be a mere 'kibe', or an inconvenient 'deity' which a moment's reasoning can put securely to sleep, then the murder of a man who stands between him and power is the most natural thing in the world; so natural that he can discuss that man's death in terms of putting him 'to bed for ever'. As for Gonzalo and those who, like him, still feel conscience as a living thing, they are brushed aside in the contemptuous 'ancient morsel', 'Sir Prudence', and in the brilliant, scornful comparison implied in 'They'll take suggestion as a cat laps milk'. The whole thing, given the will, the determination to act in freedom from all scruple, is simplicity itself.

Sebastian has nothing positive to oppose to this conviction of anarchy. He yields at once, and as he yields Shakespeare is careful to remind us once more of Antonio's other crime:

> Thy case, dear friend,
> Shall be my precedent; as thou got'st Milan,
> I'll come by Naples. Draw thy sword; one stroke
> Shall free thee from the tribute which thou payest,
> And I the king shall love thee.

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The last part of the speech shows how fully Sebastian has succumbed to the spirit of Antonio. 'One stroke', one simple decisive action is sufficient to cut through all the obstacles which antiquated ties of conscience and custom put in the way of the plotters; and in a world in which only the blow really counts, the decisive stroke backed by the will resolved to achieve its personally dictated ends, everything is simple. The blow when struck, moreover, is to free Antonio from 'tribute', from the material pledge of that natural allegiance on which all order really depends. It is all simple, so simple that it leads fatally to destruction: a destruction logically implicit in the act itself even before it is condemned by Prospero and judged by the permanent standards of the moral law which upholds him and which he, in his limited sphere, in turn upholds.

III.

In his presentation, during the same scene, of the social situation created on the island mainly by Prospero's devisings, Shakespeare carries still a step further his analysis of the nature and development of evil. He relates it, in fact, to a personal interpretation of the doctrine of the original innocence of man. This he does by putting into the mouth of Gonzalo an example, apparently drawn from Montaigne, of those nostalgic speculations about primeval simplicity which seem to have so greatly attracted the sophisticated court societies of the sixteenth century and to which the discovery of the New World had given a fresh meaning. In landing upon the island Alonso and his followers are placed in the possession of virgin soil. Here, according to Gonzalo, is their opportunity to organize a community untainted by competition or the shadow of ambition, an arcadian anarchy founded upon the permission given to each of its members to follow his own instincts. His remarks with the accompanying comments of Antonio and Sebastian, are full of interest:

Gonzalo: Had I plantation of this isle, my lord,—

Antonio: He'd sow it with nettle-seed.

Sebastian: Or docks or mallows.

Gonzalo: And were the king on't, what would I do?

Sebastian: 'Scape being drunk for want of wine.

Gonzalo: I' the commonwealth I would by contraries
Execute all things; for no kind of traffic
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
And use of service, none . . .
No occupation, all men idle, all;
And women, too, but innocent and pure;
No sovereignty;—

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Sebastian: Yet he would be king on't.

Antonio: The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning.

The dispassionate, academic catalogue in which Gonzalo expresses himself reflects perfectly the unreality of the whole dream. The nostalgia for an arcadian simplicity which produced, among other things, the pastoral convention of the sixteenth century was an international development which a writer like Cervantes, in Don Quixote's discourse on the Golden Age,[3] could raise to genuine intensity of feeling. No doubt it was a half-realized reaction against the sense of anarchy and moral pessimism which dominated so much of the court life of the time. Yet it is not Shakespeare's purpose here to express any nostalgia of this kind, but rather to use its inherent weakness as a foil to bring out certain conceptions of his own. The sources of human misery are indeed to be excluded, according to Gonzalo, from the commonwealth; but with them, as soon appears, every distinctive quality of human life. Gonzalo's next words show that the state of innocence is also necessarily the state of inexperience:

> All things in common nature should produce
> *Without sweat or endeavour*; treason, felony,
> Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine
> Would I not have; but nature should bring forth
> Of its own kind, all foison, all abundance,
> To feed my innocent people.

All this is to come about, according to Gonzalo's ideal, 'without sweat or endeavour'; but also without the salutary experience of effort from which is born, often slowly and painfully, the capacity to distinguish between good and evil which is the foundation of the whole moral life. For knowledge of good implies awareness of the evil from which it is distinguished; and this knowledge is acquired through a process, difficult but redeeming, of procreation and maturity. The inadequacy of Gonzalo's simplicity, already sufficiently indicated in his own words, is revealed once more by the comments of Antonio and Sebastian:

Sebastian: No marrying 'mong his subjects?

Antonio: None, man, all idle; whores and knaves.

Gonzalo's commonwealth is founded upon an amorality which leaves place for 'nettle-seed', 'docks', and 'mallows' to take possession of the ground. The fact that men like Antonio and Sebastian exist proves that some kind of cultivation of the human terrain is necessary. This cultivation, as they point out, is admitted by Gonzalo himself when he imagines that he is king of the island; for the 'latter', the anarchic end of his commonwealth had forgotten that its beginning was founded upon kingship,

[3] *Don Quixote*, Part I, chapter xi.

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accepted authority, 'degree'. The substance of the passage is evidently paralleled in the conception which underlies the treatment of the pastoral scene in *The Winter's Tale*. The state of nature is one which man must, in the nature of things, outgrow as his experience develops; the crucial problem is whether this development will be towards good, in the acceptance of some defined moral standard (sanctioned, in this play, by the Destiny which upholds Prospero) or towards the anarchy of unlimited personal desires.

At this point it is time to consider Caliban. For Caliban, half man and half beast, represents the real state of nature far more truely than any of Gonzalo's courtly theorizings, and in his relations with Prospero the connection between 'nature' and the moral, civilized state is far more profoundly considered. The poetic strain which, it has been generally agreed, Caliban possesses, represents in him the positive aspect of the real state of nature. Unlike the men with whom he comes into contact and who corrupt him, Caliban has the advantage of being in touch with natural simplicity. His poetry turns invariably upon his knowledge of and appreciation for the natural forces of the island. When Trinculo and Stephano meet him he offers, in language that contrasts vividly and surely of set intention with their coarseness, to show them 'the best springs' and 'berries', where the jay's nest is to be found, and how 'to snare the nimble marmoset'. All this is attractive, so attractive that we are sometimes apt to find Prospero's harshness to him—'Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself' (I, ii)—excessive and unsympathetic. Yet, if we consider further, the harshness is a necessary part of Shakespeare's purpose. For Caliban, with his natural simplicity, is indissolubly bound to Prospero. Prospero himself admits this to Miranda when he tells her:

> We cannot miss him; he does make our fire,
> Fetch in our wood, and serves in offices
> That profit us. (I, ii).

The kind of life that Prospero has established on his island assumes, in short, the existence of Caliban as a necessary condition.

Besides being necessary, moreover, Caliban is in part Prospero's creation. Finding him already on the island and needing him, Prospero tried from the first to incorporate him into the new civilized order of moral realities; and Caliban himself in his reply at once admits this and turns it into a most formidable indictment of the whole civilizing process which began by flattering him and finally turned into his tyrant:

> When thou camest first,
> Thou strok'st me, and made much of me; wouldst give me
> Water with berries in it; and teach me how
> To name the bigger light, and how the less,
> That burn by day and night; and then I lov'd thee,
> And show'd thee all the qualities o' the isle,
> The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile:

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Curs'd be I that did so! All the charms
Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!
For I am all the subjects that you have,
Which first was mine own king.

From this we may learn more than one thing fundamental to the play. In the first place, the poetry which we admire in Caliban was given to him, at least in part, by Prospero; the instinctive appreciation was, if we like, his own, a natural endowment, but the gift of expression, essentially a social, a civilizing gift, came to him from Prospero. The natural and the civilized orders are, in other words, inextricably mixed, and the problem with which Prospero is wrestling is simply that the natural, animal man is a complete anarchist. For the burden of Caliban's grievance is that Prospero has deprived him of his freedom, subjected his physical individuality to the pre-eminence of spiritual rule:

For I am all the subjects that you have,
Which first was my own king;

and he goes on to accuse Prospero of keeping him in prison who had originally been master of the whole island. Prospero's answer once more shows the problem in all its complexity:

I have used thee,
Filth as thou art, with human care, and lodg'd thee
In mine own cell, till thou didst seek to violate
The honour of my child.

Caliban, who is necessary to Prospero, whose animal instincts are a true part of human nature, is yet, by virtue of his very character, recalcitrant to all restraint, to every claim of moral discipline. Regarding himself as lawful owner of the island he echoes, in his own way, Antonio by the assertion of his right to enjoy everything that appeals to his passions as desirable; so that when Prospero gave him liberty and the use of his own cell, he used his liberty to attack his master's dearest possession in the person of his daughter.

The conflict of flesh and spirit, which is simply that between civilized values and the state of nature, is not at this point in the play within sight of resolution. The animal instincts which man inherits from nature can neither be ignored, for they are a necessary part of his being, nor integrated in the new spiritual order; and so they lie in bondage to the master who came to give them spiritual significance but who has in fact destroyed their original spontaneity:

Prospero: Abhorred slave,
Which any print of goodness will not take,
Being capable of all ill. I pitied thee,
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
One thing or other: when thou didst not, savage,
Know thine own meaning, but would gabble, like

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A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes
With words that make them known. But thy vile race,
Though thou didst learn, had that in't which good natures
Could not abide to be with: therefore wast thou
Deservedly confined into this rock, who had'st
Deserved more than a prison.

Caliban: You taught me language, and my profit on't
Is, I know how to curse.

Prospero's denunciation and Caliban's reply are each, from their own point of view, unanswerable. How to harmonize these points of view, how to fit the claims of animal instinct harmoniously into those of reasonable spirituality, is something that Prospero himself does not yet appear to see; not until the events precipitated on the island by the advent of strangers have taken their course and Ariel has spoken with the voice of judgment, is there any sign of clarification.

The deficiencies of Caliban's natural anarchism, already suggested by Prospero, are further brought out by his meeting with Stephano and Trinculo. Once more the theme is one which was being worked out in the New World before the eyes of Shakespeare's contemporaries. The arrival on the island of men from the outer world of 'civilization' is fatal to the natural creature, who escapes from the bondage of Prospero only to fall into that, infinitely more degrading, of the basest camp-followers of a supposedly civilized society. Caliban is, of course, greatly superior to Stephano and Trinculo. The poetry of his simplicity is enough to ensure that; but, divorced as he is from spiritual judgment and seeking only the anarchic freedom of his desires, he falls into a slavery which the superiority of the expression, being so incongruous, only serves to make more grotesque. Seduced by the 'celestial liquor' which Stephano gives him, he offers to serve him as a god:

I prithee be my god.
That's a brave god and bears celestial liquors;
I'll kneel to him.
I'll kiss thy foot and swear myself thy subject. (II, ii).

His aim in doing so is above all to free himself from service—'I'll bear no more sticks, but follow thee'—but, in following the freedom thus offered him by his fallacious instincts, he goes out drunk, crying 'Freedom, hey-day!', indeed, but reduced in reality to a slavery far more degrading than any to which he had been subjected before.

The depth of his degradation, and that of his new masters, is fully brought out when they next appear. Completely enslaved as he now is in his ignorance to the worthless Stephano, Caliban's savagery begins to inspire the drunken sailors to plot against Prospero; animality takes charge of human nature and debases it

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to new levels of evil. For Caliban, ridiculous though he has become in his worship of Stephano and Trinculo, is far more dangerous than the other two. In the brutal savagery of his proposals something breaks out which has been held in check so far by the domination of Prospero. That something finds expression in the unrestrained physical cruelty of the speeches in which he outlines his plot against his former master. Prospero is to be brained in his sleep, to have his skull battered in with a log, to be 'paunched' with a stake, to have his throat cut; most brutally of all perhaps—

> I'll yield thee him asleep
> Where thou mayst knock a nail into his head. (III, ii).

But first, and above all, he must be deprived of his books:

> Remember
> First to possess his books; for without them
> He's but a sot as I am, nor hath not
> One spirit to command: they all do hate him
> As rootedly as I.

In ascribing his own hatred to the other spirits Caliban is speaking falsely, measuring spiritual things in terms of his own anarchic bestiality; but his emphasis on the books, and on his own comparative sottishness without them, shows that he realizes and fears the sources of Prospero's power. His realization accounts for the vehemence of his proposals. Against the spiritual power of Prospero his own instincts arise in physically inspired revulsion. The true motive of his craving for liberty is expressed more directly in the same and other speeches:

> . . . that most deeply to consider is
> The beauty of his daughter.
> . . . She will become thy bed, I warrant,
> And bring thee forth brave brood.

The use of the word 'brood' to describe the progeny of this imagined union brings out well the animal spirit in which it is conceived, the revolt of passion against reason, of 'blood' against moral control which it implies. And this is the spirit which leads Caliban to 'lick the boots' of the coarsest, lowest kind of human being. That he is still superior to Stephano and Trinculo is shown by the survival of his poetic instincts ('Be not afeared, the isle is full of noises'); but his subjection is in essence complete and springs inevitably from his conception of liberty. We are reminded of Shakespeare's treatment of the problem of liberty in *Measure for Measure*. In that play Claudio, as he is being taken to prison, freely confesses that the cause of his present condition is 'liberty, too much liberty'.[4] Freedom from restraint, unchecked by adherence to any spiritual loyalty freely accepted, can lead man through his instincts only to moral dissolution and chaos. This in turn is the lowest form

[4] *Measure for Measure*, I, ii.

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of slavery. Caliban is bound by his nature to service, but his service, which might have been that offered him by Prospero when he first took him into his cell and tried to teach him the civilized graces, turns to a mixture of the lowest animal brutality and sheer folly.

IV.

At this point the development of the situation on the island is substantially complete. The two plots—that against Alonso and that against Prospero—are fully launched and the original seclusion of the island has been most effectively shattered by the entry of human passion and sin. Yet Prospero, in spite of all, has the threads in his hands and it is precisely at this moment that he chooses to indicate the moral resolution. Ariel's great speech addressed to Alonso and his companions before he deprives them of the enchanted banquet that has just been set before them is, in fact, nothing less than the keystone upon which the structure of the whole play rests:

> You are three men of sin, whom Destiny,
> That hath to instrument this lower world,
> And what is in't, the never-surfeited sea
> Hath caus'd to belch up you; and, on this island,
> Where man doth not inhabit, you 'mongst men
> Being most unfit to live . . .
> But remember
> (For that's my business to you) that you three
> From Milan did supplant good Prospero,
> Expos'd unto the sea (which hath requit it)
> Him and his innocent child: for which foul deed,
> The powers delaying, not forgetting, have
> Incens'd the seas and shores, yea, all the creatures,
> Against your peace. Thee of thy son, Alonso,
> They have bereft; and do pronounce by me
> Lingering perdition (worse than any death
> Can be at once) shall step by step attend
> You and your ways, whose wraths to guard you from,
> Which here, in this most desolate isle, else falls
> Upon your heads, is nothing but heart's sorrow
> And a clear life ensuing. (III, iii).

Here at last—rather even than in any speech of Prospero's—is an explicit statement of what *The Tempest* is about. Shakespeare is careful to introduce the speech with a degree of pageantry and circumstance that make it stand out with great dramatic force against the general action. Ariel—generally the 'gentle Ariel' of Prospero's preference—is brought on to the stage in the form of a harpy to the accompaniment of thunder and lightning. He causes the banquet to vanish by a motion of his wings and then, left face to face with those he has come to judge, he speaks. His words have a weighted simplicity that underlines their unique character

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and seriousness. The effect is obtained by means so direct that they barely call for analysis. Partly by the persistent use of heavy vocalic stresses, partly by the emphatic use of pauses in the middle and at the end of lines, partly by the significant insertion of parenthetic pauses into long unfolding sentences, the speech attains a measured magnificence unsurpassed, in its kind, anywhere in Shakespeare. Unsurpassed because, perhaps for the first time in his work, the voice of Destiny delivers itself directly in judgment. 'I and my fellows', says Ariel, 'are ministers of Fate'. As such he speaks and, by so speaking, he brings out the full meaning of the play.

The most important feature of the speech, indeed, is its affirmation of Destiny. This affirmation is, in its unequivocal expression, unique in Shakespeare's work. Much of the symbolism of the later plays—the use, for example, of the associations of 'grace' in relation to fertility—has religious implications; but nowhere, not even in *The Winter's Tale* with its still rather misty references to 'the gods', is Destiny so *personally* conceived or conceded such absolute power in the working out of human affairs. Destiny, according to Ariel, 'hath to instrument the lower world'. 'Delaying, not forgetting', it watches over the whole story and brings the characters concerned in it, with infallible foreknowledge to the conclusions willed by absolute justice. All this, however it may have been foreshadowed in earlier works, is substantially new, but at the same time inevitable. For all Shakespeare's symbolism, with the harmonizing purpose which underlies it, moves towards the presentation of the problems, moral and artistic, involved in this final acceptance of the personal reality of Destiny. Without that acceptance the intuition of 'grace' is only an insubstantial dream, a tenuous harmony woven out of elements that have no more validity than that of a personal mood; with it, possibly, the author lays himself open to the charge of going beyond his experience, of introducing an element of discontinuity in what had been so far the harmonious pattern of his work. Whatever we may conclude in this respect, we should do well to begin by recognizing that the problem, and the effort to resolve it, were implicit in the whole Shakespearean experience. Needless to say it was not part of the artist's purpose to substantiate this objective conception of Destiny by argument; but it was his aim, inevitable and necessary, to place it in the centre of his play, to allow the symbolic web of experiences to form around it and to see if it would, in the last analysis, fit.

In the detailed working out of this conception he returns to familiar ground. The symbolic use of storm and its association with new-born forces of harmony is one common to all Shakespeare's last plays. Marina in *Pericles* loses her mother and is herself apparently lost in a storm at sea, but the storm itself throws her up on a friendly shore and eventually she is restored to her father's arms. In *The Winter's Tale*, when Perdita is exposed to the elements by her father's unreasoning folly, she is found by the shepherds and her finding, while the storm is still raging and the

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younger Clown sees a ship struggling in vain to preserve itself against the elements, is really the first step in reconciliation: 'thou mettest with things dying, I with things new-born'.[5] So it is in *The Tempest*. Only here 'the never-surfeited seas' are explicitly controlled by a Destiny which has 'incensed' them against the 'foul deed' of those who plotted against Prospero and made them, in their anger, the instruments of an inexorable justice. The sea, to which Prospero and Miranda were exposed by human selfishness, has—through Prospero's own action—brought the criminals to judgment.

The key-note of the whole play, which Ariel comes to emphasize, is indeed *judgment*. Only when the good and evil in human nature have been understood and separated will the final reconciliation and restoration of harmony take place. This moral judgment is based in *The Tempest* upon an objective sanction which needs to be proved in operation. For this purpose—and really for this purpose alone—the various actors in the forgotten story of Naples and Milan have been brought together through the providential action of the storm upon 'this most desolate isle', 'where man doth not inhabit'. Desolate surely because the work of purgation which is about to be accomplished needs to be accompanied by abstinence and a certain asceticism; and desolate too because it is not a place upon which men are to live their full, civilized lives—after the final reconciliation it is left by all except those whose nature debars them from playing a part in the 'brave new world' of beings at once spiritualized and social to which they are being offered entry—but on which they are to achieve moral understanding and learn to accept the judgment passed upon them. In this process of education the fundamental need is for repentance. Repentance is the necessary consequence, on the human side, of accepting judgment. Here again the conception is not new in Shakespeare. His last plays throw an increasing stress upon the Christian conception of penitence. Lear is restored to his daughter after becoming aware of his own folly although the restoration, still insufficiently developed to prevail against the tragic spirit which dominates the play, is only temporary and illusory; Leontes, after sixteen years of penance for the follies to which his own passion has prompted him, is restored to Hermione and, through the innocence of his daughter, to his broken friendship with Polixenes. Ariel calls for a similar repentance from Alonso and his fellows. Unless their sojourn 'on this most desolate isle' has taught them their own evil and folly, unless it has shown them the necessity for 'heart's sorrow' and a 'clear life' to follow, their doom is certain. For it is in the nature of unbridled passion, as Shakespeare had already presented it in the great series of tragedies from *Othello* to *Timon of Athens*, to lead its victims to self-destruction; and

[5]Act III, Sc. iii. I have tried to indicate the importance of this and other passages from *The Winter's Tale* in an essay on the play published in *Arena*, January 1938, pp. 301-314.

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The Tempest, with its insistence upon ideas of penance and amendment that can only follow from acceptance of a personal, spiritual conception of Destiny, is conceived as nothing less than a counterpoise to this tragic process of ruin.

V.

The way is now clear for a full understanding of the latter part of *The Tempest*. After the decisive intervention of Ariel, Prospero's own words reflect an increase of confidence and power which itself indicates that the play is passing into a new stage:

> my high charms work,
> And these my enemies are all knit up
> In their distraction; *they are in my power*. (III, iv).

This power is, of course, magic, symbolical in quality and cannot therefore be realistically judged. Its justification, the proof that it is more than an abstract imposition upon what has been so far a very close analysis of the roots and consequences of selfishness, will be *poetic*, will depend upon Shakespeare's success in making the symbolic framework live through the vitality conveyed in his web of imagery.

The process of drawing the symbolic threads to their appointed conclusion has several stages. The first is to consummate the union of Miranda and Ferdinand. Upon the union of the children, in *The Tempest* as in *The Winter's Tale*, the reconciliation of the parents and of all the characters depends. Prospero has chosen to test their constancy severely, but we have already found (III, i) that they have met the test successfully. Suffering has only cemented, through mutual compassion, their devotion to one another; for, as Ferdinand himself puts it—

> some kinds of baseness
> Are nobly undergone; and most poor matters
> Point to rich ends. (III, i).

Here again, if we are not to be disappointed, it is necessary to accustom ourselves to the symbolic climate which pervades the play. The suffering of the two lovers, considered from a purely realistic point of view, may appear abstract and even perfunctory; but once we place the emphasis where it should be, upon the poetic content of the drama to which all Shakespeare's development points, it has its sufficient justification. The poet's use of words, relating this apparent commonplace to elements most essential to the verbal texture of *The Tempest*, brings this home to us. 'Nobly' and 'rich' become clearly associated with the vision of a redeemed, ennobled humanity and with the new vitality that springs from the harmonizing of the passions. Once more we are reminded of earlier plays. Antony and Cleopatra were 'noble' in the love which constituted their triumph, even in the face of defeat, over the political world dominated by Octavius; and riches, in the hands of Duncan, serve

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to manifest the overflowing generosity of 'grace'. The love of Miranda and Ferdinand, once it has fully unfolded under the guidance of Prospero, will move upon similar levels.

The effect of imagery of this kind is necessarily cumulative. Its first expressions need to be appreciated in conscious retrospect. When Miranda herself appears to Ferdinand as he is bearing his logs and speaks to him in the unsuspected presence of Prospero, the same impression of unique nobility begins, almost line by line, to penetrate the verse; as we read we feel indeed the truth of Ferdinand's remark that 'The mistress which I serve quickens what's dead'. Their emotion, as it expands, brings both the lovers to a new and intenser life. Miranda becomes 'precious creature', 'the top of admiration', 'perfect', 'peerless'; whilst, as to Ferdinand, Miranda says all when she says:

> I would not wish
> Any companion in the world but you;
> Nor can imagination form a shape,
> Besides yourself, to like of.

In lines like this the exaltation of love first undertaken, against a political background, *in Antony and Cleopatra*, and developed in *The Winter's Tale* reaches its full symbolic consummation. Moved by such love for one another Ferdinand and Miranda are ready for Prospero's blessing upon their union. He gives it, still invisible, in lines pregnant with fertility and 'grace' which are most splendidly interwoven with those of the lovers:

Ferdinand: I,
Beyond all limit of what else i' the world,
Do love, prize, honour you.
Miranda: I am a fool
To weep at what I am glad of.
Prospero: Fair encounter
Of two most rare affections! Heavens rain grace
On that which breeds between them.
Ferdinand. Wherefore weep you?
Miranda: At mine unworthiness, that dare not offer
What I desire to give; and much less take
What I shall die to want. But this is trifling,
And all the more it seeks to hide itself
The bigger bulk it shows.

Once again the parallels with other Shakespearean utterances are numerous and significant. All the symbolic imagery of the last plays is here; the 'grace' which blesses union and expresses itself in fertility and a grief which is itself life-giving. Miranda's love opens to expression like the child growing in the mother's womb. Her grief becomes something rich and infinitely precious, itself of redeeming quality; and Prospero, who has given Ferdinand 'a third' of his own life, lays by his gift the foundations of reconciliation in the eyes of Destiny:

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here, afore heaven,
I ratify this my rich gift. (IV, i).

The rather perfunctory masque, commonplace in spite of its involved stressing of the images of fertility and love, is scarcely necessary after the brief scenes which it is intended to ratify. We may pass over it to the other issues which await Prospero.

For in spite of these notes of reconciliation and redeeming grief the presence of passion still has to make itself felt. As in the pastoral scene of *The Winter's Tale* the poetry of love is in a sense premature, needs to be confirmed by a wider experience, expanded into something more inclusive of the normal order of human experience. Just as Perdita and Florizel are torn apart by the entry of the aged and angry Polixenes, so is the idyll of Ferdinand and Miranda always present in Prospero's mind side by side with his knowledge of the plot against his life. Prospero, indeed, never forgets the sombre background of these idyllic scenes. His preoccupation with it has been present from the first in a strange irritability which contrasts strongly at times with his prevailing serenity; and, even as he is bringing Ferdinand and Miranda finally together, it comes out in a warning which at first strikes us as almost cryptically out of place:

Look thou be true; do not give dalliance
Too much the rein: the strongest oaths are straw
To the fire i' the blood; be more abstemious . . . (IV, i).

The fact is that Prospero has good reason to remember the evil effects of passion. The forces of evil are still at work on the island. He has brought them there himself for the final and decisive conflict. As we already know from Ariel's speech he is called upon to judge as well as to reconcile; and as soon as the marriage 'ceremony' is over his other cares press back on his mind:

I had forgot the foul conspiracy
Of the beast Caliban and his confederates.

The thought, as Ferdinand observes, moves Prospero deeply and it is in the shadow of it that he makes his reflections on the insubstantiality of human affairs. The spirit in which it is spoken is manifest in the concluding lines which, although relatively unfamiliar, are perhaps the key to the type of feeling which produced the whole:

Sir, I am vexed;
Bear with my weakness, my old brain is troubled;
Be not disturbed with my infirmity;
If you be pleas'd, retire into my cell,
And there repose; a turn or two I'll walk,
To still my beating mind.

It is a mood very akin to pessimism that the thought of Caliban's plot rouses in Prospero. We feel him definitely steeling himself to meet it, to overcome evil in accordance with the moral conception of which he is the instrument. There is a deep sense of tension and

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impending conflict, not always given their true value in defining the total impression made by the play, in his greeting to Ariel: 'We must prepare to meet with Caliban'. With Caliban, be it noted, rather than with his fellow-conspirators. They, when the time comes, will be easily led from their purposes by the prospect of trumpery spoils. Caliban is more formidable, because his evil is rooted in an animal nature which no amount of civilized attention can change. He is, in fact, an original inhabitant of the isle as Prospero has known it; and his is the irreducible element of bestiality in unredeemed human nature:

> A devil, a born devil, on whose nature
> Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains
> Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost;
> And as with age his body uglier grows,
> So his mind cankers.

The lines are pregnant with the rotting, cankering effect of evil on man's being, driven home by the contrast between 'nature' and 'nurture', between inherent savagery and the civilizing sense implied in 'humanely'. All Prospero's efforts to regenerate Caliban have failed, and when he actually comes in, driven by Ariel with his fellow-conspirators, he alone shows himself obdurate in his purposes. While his companions are carried away by the hope of loot he remains firm in his intention to murder Prospero: 'Let it alone, thou fool, it is but trash' (IV, i). Stephano and Trinculo have corrupted him indeed in so far as they have added to his original nature a ridiculous deification of the vices of civilization symbolized in the figure of the bottle-bearing god; but the evil was in him before their arrival, since he was—after all—the heir of Sycorax against whom Prospero had struggled to purify the island. The purpose of Caliban, as we have seen, is to achieve liberty, to destroy civilized restraints and live a life of anarchic, passion-directed freedom; the existence of this purpose is not affected, though the possibility of attaining it is, by his willingness to become in the very hour of his liberation from Prospero the servant of Stephano:

> Do that good mischief which may make this island
> Thine own for ever, and I, thy Caliban,
> For aye thy foot-licker.

Yet this speech amounts to an admission that the liberty desired by Caliban is unattainable, that his freedom from Prospero's direction can only be bought at the price of slavery to something infinitely lower and more degrading, and in fact, with the help of Ariel, they are all three—Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo—easily defeated together.

With their defeat the time has come for the final resolution. Ferdinand and Miranda can now be united on an island purged by Prospero of the shadow of evil; and their union will serve at last to bring their divided parents once more together. The last scene of the play is one of those conclusions, so common in Shake-

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speare, in which the various strands of the play are brought together and its characters marshalled for the final grouping. The type, of course, is common in the earlier comedies, and there are signs of a development from it—even faintly symbolic—in the *denouement* of *Measure for Measure*; but it is only in the last plays that this technique appears fully adapted to the symbolic themes of reconciliation and regeneration. The scene opens with an announcement by Prospero that the moment of final resolution has come:

> Now does my project gather to a head;
> My charms crack not; my spirits obey, and time
> Goes upright with his carriage. (V, i);

and Ariel confirms that this is 'the sixth hour', at which 'You said our work should cease'.

Having thus anticipated the approaching resolution Ariel goes on to paint his master a picture of the state in which he has left Alonso and his companions, a state in which he stresses the deep penitence of those of them who are capable of regeneration; and Prospero responds to this picture of repentance in the manner typical of the last plays, that is by forgiveness:

> Though with their high wrongs I am stung to the quick,
> Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
> Do I take part; the rarer action is
> In virtue than in vengeance; they being penitent,
> The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
> Not a frown further. (V, i).

The wording of the speech is worth pausing over. The victory of compassion over retribution is now a victory of the 'nobler reason' against passionate fury. Nowhere is the part played by the Christian ethic in shaping this play more clearly stated. Reason and nobility are closely associated through all Shakespeare's tragic period. For Hamlet it is the use of reason that distinguishes man from the beast, makes him 'the paragon of animals'; and it is just because reason does not lead him to realize this ideal of nobility in action that he is plunged into internal tragedy. Now, in *The Tempest*, the nobility of reason is finally asserted in an act of compassion which transcends the exercise of reasonable justice itself. In Ariel's great speech, as we have already seen, the necessity of retribution is stated. Now, once it has been affirmed and the actual punishment meted out, it gives way to the higher, still more 'reasonable' (because 'nobler') virtue of compassion; and the bond between them, the thing which makes the transition possible, is simply the reasoned admission of guilt on the part of those whom Destiny has punished. To their reason, which has at last ennobled itself by acceptance, only a similar nobility in forgiveness can fitly respond. When it does so, in the words of Prospero, the pattern of the play is to all intents and purposes complete.

The moment of resolution is now at hand. Alonso and the group of courtiers who accompany him are brought in, spell-

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bound, and Prospero's first action is to restore them to their full reason. The instrument of restoration in accordance with the prevailing symbolism of the play, is music which imposes harmony upon elements otherwise discordant. To its notes they wake, recover their being, or—more accurately—are transformed into a new life—

> The charm dissolves apace
> And as the morning steals upon the night,
> Melting the darkness, so their rising senses
> Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle
> Their clearer reason . . .
> Their understanding
> Begins to swell, and the approaching tide
> Will shortly fill the reasonable shore
> Which now lies foul and muddy.

Once more the symbolic purpose is clear enough. The restoration to normality of Alonso and his followers is at the same time a triumph of the dawning reason over the night of passion-inspired sensuality. The 'rising senses' are purified of the 'ignorant fumes' that have hitherto impeded them and become the true instruments of the 'clearer reason'. Not, of course, that the senses are bad in themselves. No one who has read *Antony and Cleopatra*, written not so long before *The Tempest*, can imagine that Shakespeare meant such a thing. It is not the senses in themselves, but the disharmony with reason, control, 'degree' that produces tragedy; and Prospero's whole activity has been an effort to restore the balance, to see reason and the senses working in a harmonious, fruitful co-operation, fertile in its consequences and crowned by 'grace'. This is the moment of his triumph. The 'approaching tide' of life fills 'the reasonable shore' and heralds the arrival of a new, more gracious humanity.

Yet even in the moment of triumph Prospero remembers the claims of judgment. Not all the courtiers before him can be expected to move on the same moral plane. Gonzalo, expressly described in religious terms as 'holy' and 'honourable', is of course capable of entering into the new world of 'grace'; so is Alonso, purified by repentance of his former sinfulness. These two Prospero embraces with an overflowing richness of affection that has, ever since Duncan, been associated in Shakespeare with the poetry of 'grace':

> I embrace thy body . . .
> Let me embrace thine age, whose honour cannot
> Be measur'd or confin'd.

But this fulness of emotion, expressing itself in the passionate directness of 'I embrace *thy body*' and in the unlimited exaltation of its object, is an answer to penitence, to Alonso's concrete desire to resign his dukedom to its proper owner. In Antonio and Sebastian there is no such repentance, and therefore no such reconciliation. When Prospero rebukes them in an aside their only

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comment is 'The devil speaks in him'; to which he replies, even in the moment of forgiveness, with an intensity of denunciation that brings home to us the continued existence of evil at this point:

> For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother
> Would even infect my mouth, I do forgive
> Thy rankest fault—all of them; and require
> My dukedom of thee, which perforce, I know,
> Thou must restore.

Justice, based on the moral condemnation which is felt so strongly behind 'infect' and 'rankest' and in the bitter afterthought 'all of them', needs to be satisfied as well as love; even in the culminating moment of happiness the reality of sin is alive to the memory. Forgiveness and condemnation are fused into a single gesture, and Antonio and Sebastian are by their own choice excluded from the new world which their presence must in itself destroy.

The time has now come to complete the reconciliation. As we have said already, the children are to be responsible for bringing the fathers together. Their loss, indeed, has been an essential part of the process willed by Destiny. Alonso is still suffering for the loss, which he believes final, of his son: suffering so much that he calls his state 'irreparable' and past the cure of patience. But Prospero too has lost his daughter, in the sense that he has allowed, even inspired her to love the son of his former enemy; and in their common *loss* is the matter for reconciliation. The desire for it now comes most opportunely into Alonso's mind. He wishes that the two children were alive as 'king and queen' in Naples, and that he himself, still not forgetful of his past errors, 'were muddied in that oozy bed' where his son lies. With this gesture Prospero is satisfied. He discovers Ferdinand and Miranda at their game of chess and the stage is set for the final reconciliation in the freshly-dawned light of grace. Miranda's words to Ferdinand—

> Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle,
> And I would call it fair play—

remind us, in the implied comparison between the value of love and that of earthly kingdoms, of the first appearance of Antony and Cleopatra in the earlier tragedy: very different characters but the same boundless emotion of transfiguring love.

The lines which follow are completely typical of Shakespeare's latest manner. Upon their poetic quality depends the success of the symbolic purpose. For, realistically considered, the whole action of these last scenes—Alonso's repentance, Prospero's 'loss' of his daughter to counterbalance the supposed loss of Ferdinand—is thin and inadequate. But the details of the plot at this stage of *The Tempest* have no more importance than that which attaches to them as the necessary thread of incident upon which is based the whole choreography of a great *ballet*; and indeed the whole of the last scene of the play is really conceived as a formal *ballet* in which words replace visual images as the main artistic medium. This was

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the dramatic conception towards which Shakespeare was moving in his last plays and which he achieves most fully in the crucial passage of the concluding episode of *The Tempest*. It opens with a recognition on the part of Ferdinand of the essential part played throughout this story by the sea as the minister of Destiny:

> Though the seas threaten, they are merciful,
> I have curs'd them without cause.

The tragedy and suffering which have been caused by human sinfulness have turned, in other words, into the instruments of reconciliation to a life fuller and richer than theirs. The entry into this life is symbolized, as usual, by the mutual act of blessing and forgiveness by which fathers and children are reconciled. Once more the situation, which recalls that of Cordelia and the restored Lear or that of the final scenes of *The Winter's Tale*, has about it more than a touch of what we should now call *ballet* technique; to appreciate the effect fully we need to see the characters significantly grouped for the religious act of benediction. Ferdinand kneels for blessing and is joined to Miranda. In their words to one another the vision of a reconciled, redeemed humanity is at last given clear poetic expression:

Alonso: Now all the blessings
Of a glad father compass thee about!
Miranda: O, wonder!
How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is! O, brave new world,
That has such people in't!

The vision of a new humanity, already glimpsed by Miranda in her innocent compassion when she first saw Ferdinand and now deepened by the trials to which Prospero has put her, here reaches its full expression: and in the lines which follow immediately after Ferdinand recognizes both that this bride has been given him by 'immortal Providence' and that he has received from Prospero nothing less than a second life. In this second life his fellows—those of them who have shown a proper disposition—naturally participate. As the children are finally joined the two fathers are also brought together, Alonso craving pardon and Prospero granting forgiveness, both with the blessing of the divine grace:

Alonso: O, how oddly will it sound that I
Must ask my child forgiveness!
Prospero: There, sir, stop,
Let not us burthen our remembrance with
A heaviness that's gone.
Gonzalo: I have inly wept,
Or should have spoke ere this. Look down, you gods,
And on this couple drop a blessed crown!
For it is you that have chalked forth the way
Which brought us hither.

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In the light of earlier plays this is not difficult to interpret. Alonso, like Lear, like Leontes, has come through penitence to realize his errors and to ask his one child forgiveness; and Prospero replies that the time has come to cast off the burthen of past memories and to look forward to a harmony that long and often bitter experience has gained. And, apart from them both, the faithful Gonzalo is given for a moment a dignity that he has not so far reached in the play, a dignity that makes him at this stage—rather even than Prospero—the mouthpiece of Destiny. In his words the gods are invoked to 'crown' the new-born vision of humanity with a symbol of royalty: the gods who have unwound the whole plot and brought it at last to its harmonious conclusion. The crown that they bestow is, in effect, a sign of the 'second', the redeemed and 'reasonable' life which has been given the protagonists of the play through their experiences on the island. As Gonzalo puts it a few lines further down—

> In one voyage
> Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis,
> And Ferdinand, her brother, found a wife
> *Where he himself was lost*; Prospero his dukedom
> In a poor isle; *and all of us ourselves,*
> *When no man whas his own.*

In the light of these lines the whole action of the play—the loss no less than the finding, the separations no less than the re-unions—is clearly seen to be a closely woven texture of symbolic elements. Recognized as such it grows vastly into a significance that rounds off our understanding of the whole play. For it is at this point, if anywhere, that the pattern of *The Tempest*—and with it the whole pattern initiated in the historical plays and carried through the tragedies to these last symbolic comedies—is substantially complete.

DEREK TRAVERSI.

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

SHAKESPEARE AND THE MEANINGS OF 'NATURE'

SHAKESPEARE'S DOCTRINE OF NATURE, A Study of King Lear, by John F. Danby (Faber and Faber, 16/-).

When we look back over the Shakespeare criticism of the last twenty years we can discern certain trends to which critics and scholars of very different kinds have contributed. Perhaps the most significant change that recent criticism has brought about is that the 'new' Shakespeare is much less impersonal than the old. Whereas in the older view Shakespeare was the god-like creator of

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a peopled world, projecting—it is true—his own spirit into the inhabitants, but remaining essentially the analyst of 'their' passions, he is now felt as much more immediately engaged in the action he puts before us. If the verse has now moved well into the centre of attention, this is because the linguistic vitality is felt as the chief clue to the urgent personal themes that not only shape the poetic-dramatic structure of each play but form the figure in the carpet of the canon as a whole. A second shift is that Shakespeare's thought has been more closely related to the thought of his age—an age that was simultaneously mediæval and modern—and its enduring quality, as with all enduring thought, is seen as an intimately personal response to problems that presented themselves in a specific historical context. The contemporary reassessment of Shakespeare is part of the reassessment of his age, which in turn is part of the reassessment of our own.

The occasion of these remarks is a notable book by Mr. John F. Danby in which these different forms of reassessment are deliberately brought together in a single effort of understanding. The centre of attention is *King Lear*. But understanding of *King Lear* is seen to involve understanding of intellectual and emotional trends in Shakespeare's work as a whole, and, behind these, of ideas and attitudes current when Shakespeare wrote. Both Mr. Danby's method and his major theme are indicated when he remarks of the characters in the play that none is complex,

> 'yet each has an unmistakable richness of significance and an emphatic vitality. The richness and vitality come from the way in which they are related, through decision, to the abruptly contoured Nature [*i.e.*, to sharply contrasted ideas of Nature] which forms the general background . . . The characters thus call for the same kind of treatment as the characters of Morality. They are not Morality-figures. They stand one stage nearer to actuality than the personages of allegory. The clear Morality outline is however included in the play. The unambiguous Morality statement is presented in the deliberate stance each character adopts in the clearly-marked field'.

The field in question is the field in which significant choice is seen to involve an attitude to 'Nature'—including in this term both the general scheme of things and man's 'nature' and his place in the wider scheme. Stated thus baldly this is the theme of Mr. Wilson Knight in his essay on 'The Lear Universe' in *The Wheel of Fire*. But whereas Mr. Wilson Knight confines himself strictly to the text of the play, Mr. Danby demonstrates how Shakespeare, for his special purposes, enlisted the varied meanings of 'Nature' that the age provided.

Now a primary difficulty is that strictly speaking there is no 'Elizabethan view of Nature'. Of the many uses of the term that we meet with in Elizabethan literature none is capable of precise definition of a kind that we find, say, in J. S. Mill's lucid (and thoroughly nineteenth-century) essay on 'Nature'. As Mr. Danby

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makes plain, when an Elizabethan uses the word it is likely that he is invoking one or more of a whole cluster of related ideas. There is the idea of the divinely ordained pattern in the universe as a whole. There is the idea of man's essential nature, not as given, but as a good to be realized. And associated with these there are ideas of reason, custom, law, co-operation and degree. Mr. Danby shows how the use of 'Nature' and 'natural' by, say, Hooker on the one hand and by Hobbes on the other, involved a radically contrasted conception of man, reason, and society. In the seventeenth century there was an increasing tendency to regard Nature as a system of a-moral forces, man as merely a part of this system, reason as 'a calculator of the means to satisfy the appetites with which we are born', and society as an expedient for regulating the conflicting claims of its individual units. *King Lear* shows the clash of these rival meanings of Nature and of the implications that necessarily accompany these meanings in the actualities of human intercourse. The main—or the most explicit—embodiment of the newer outlook is of course Edmund, whose opening soliloquy, 'Thou Nature art my Goddess', Mr. Danby rightly regards as crucial.[1] Edmund is the New Man, the representative of a new kind of society; and in a fascinating chapter on Edmund's ancestry Mr. Danby traces the changes of Shakespeare's attitude to the New Man (who is often explicitly the Machiavel) from Richard III onwards. Over against Edmund is Cordelia, and to understand Cordelia we need to invoke not individual psychology but the traditional view of Nature, of natural rights, duties, and relationships. Finally, in a chapter on Lear regarded both as King and Everyman, Mr. Danby brings together his varied but associated themes, showing how, in Lear's fluctuations between the rival 'Natures' before his final reconciliation with Cordelia, Shakespeare is able to develop and deepen his insight into the individual moral sources of social disorder. 'The King good or bad, the state just or unjust, rebellion right or wrong, man himself a concord or a discord: all depends on the transactions that take place between the King and Nature. For the King should be representative man, the expression of every man's "natural honesty", and as such the embodiment of the health of the state—a health of "diverse parts coupled with blessed concord" '. A short concluding section sketches a view of poetry not as an 'attitude to life' but as embodied wisdom, in the presence of which we are summoned to our most significant acts of choice.

[1]It may be assumed that when Shakespeare created Edmund he had in mind some 'advanced' contemporary discussion. Edmund, like D'Amville in *The Atheist's Tragedy*, holds opinions about morality similar to those attributed to the French 'libertins' of the early seventeenth century, but one might expect to find evidence from nearer home. A recent essay by Professor R. C. Bald, 'Thou, Nature, art my goddess', in the Folger Library volume of *Memorial Studies to J. Q. Adams* helps to confirm the impression of topicality.

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A summary such as this, by suggesting that the play is handled simply as a focus of 'ideas', does less than justice to Mr. Danby. It is the unique and integral work of art that he starts from and brings us back to. Yet because his criticism is not only the expression of a genuinely individual mind but has also a representative significance, it may be permissible merely to assert its merits and to try to define a certain uneasiness that one feels when considering Mr. Danby's critical method.

A distinction that I wish to make hinges on a disagreement that may at first seem arbitrary. Reminding us that Shakespeare 'stands closer than we do to the Morality', Mr. Danby adds: 'The people of his stories can have a direct relation to ideas behind the story . . . and story, finally, can exist independently for its own sake: and it, too, can have direct access to the body of meaning that informs it'. We have here three statements, to the first of which we give the assent that a new bit of original insight compels, and to the last of which we may find reasons for assenting. In a paragraph of which the general tenour is so admirable we may perhaps slide over the second of the three statements I have quoted: 'story can exist independently for its own sake'. It represents, however, an important aspect of Mr. Danby's method, and deserves some consideration. It reappears subsequently as the assertion that 'the bare contour of the story has been expressing the play's most inward meanings' (p. 194), and that we can 'find Shakespeare's deepest meanings precisely where they should be in successful art—on the surface' (p. 203).

Now 'story', like 'surface', is an abstraction, and the validity of anything that may be said about 'story' as an expression of 'inward meaning' will be in direct proportion to the critic's felt sense of the pressure on 'story' of a specific body of experience. When that pressure slackens there is a danger of taking the abstraction and, as it were, slipping behind it a set of meanings that have only a superficial resemblance to the original tissue from which it was torn. We see this process when Mr. Danby enlists *Troilus and Cressida* in support of his interpretation (in itself just) of Tudor official propaganda:

> 'Society was supposed to be an ideal order—Troilus' Cressida. The same system in actuality could behave like Diomed's bitch. Troilus's dilemma when he sees his ideal in the arms of Diomed is Shakespeare's dilemma when he sees Nature claimed for the Virgin Queen and James (by Divine Right) the First' (p. 52).

We see it also in the comment on *Othello* on page 65. And I think that the difficulty I experience in following the argument of the chapter called 'Killing the King' (a retrospective survey of some of the plays immediately preceding *King Lear*) may be due to similar causes.

To use 'story' in this way when we are dealing with Shakespeare's greater tragedies is to employ meanings at once too exactly formulated and too loose, and I can only regard it as fortunate

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that in so much of the book Mr. Danby is concerned with a good deal more than story: or is at all events concerned with story in direct relation to the body of specific internal meanings that make *Lear* 'so, and not otherwise'. But even in the handling of *Lear* itself the tendency to abstract and to schematize does seem to me sometimes to get in the way of the full development of Mr. Danby's best insights. Of Lear in the storm scenes he can say with force and point, 'We are no longer spectators of *this* man in *those* circumstances. We occupy the same heath as Lear and are fellow agents and patients . . . [for] the root of the mind is reached and activated' (pp. 180-181). Yet he can at times speak as though the poetry of *King Lear* is a medium not for 'exploratory creation' but for the expression of 'previously definite ideas'.[2] 'Hooker's axiomatic decencies', we are told (p. 27), 'are those which Lear himself holds to'. I think it is this that explains why, in the chapter on Lear himself, and in spite of the explicit insistence on Lear's fluctuations between the rival Natures, we miss something of the sense of vital process, of discovery at the deepest levels of experience. For me, at all events, this chapter has not the force and vividness of a fully bodied response that I find in the essay by Mr. Wilson Knight to which I referred earlier. It is only when the 'ideas' or 'doctrines' are felt as assimilated into a profoundly exploratory poetry that we achieve that reorientation of the whole self, that activation of the root of the mind, which Mr. Danby is well aware is what great tragedy demands. Neither Lear nor we ourselves hold to any 'view' (p. 21) until, in the terms used in the play, we 'see' because we have been forced to 'feel'. It is only then that Cordelia can become, as Mr. Danby says, 'a kind of beneficient Goddess of Nature' as well as a representative of human integrity and naturalness. In other words we glimpse possibilities of a relationship between man and external Nature radically different from that represented by Edmund, Goneril, and Regan. 'A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees'.

I hope I have made it plain that Mr. Danby's book is one that provokes formulation of disagreement as a tribute to its seriousness and integrity. What my emphasis may have obscured is that its value is very far indeed from being confined to an invitation to re-thinking. It is sure to be read; but for justice's sake I should like to end with a personal tribute. The book has notably enriched my own understanding of *King Lear*, of Shakespeare, and of his times. There are many passages (as different as the account of Shakespeare's 'growing period' in *King Henry IV* and the examination of the significance of Cordelia's 'Nothing') to which I know I shall return for further pondering. And in a brilliant short chapter, 'The Fool and Handy-dandy', Mr. Danby offers the best account

[2] I take these phrases from F. R. Leavis's essay, 'Tragedy and the "Medium" ' (*Scrutiny*, XII, 4, p. 249), in which the implications for tragedy of these different uses of language are developed. It seems to me especially pertinent to refer to this essay at this point.

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that I have seen of the dramatic function of the Fool. It is perhaps significant that this chapter starts from an acute observation on the nature of the Fool's speech and is closely argued throughout in terms of the particular. There is no question here of the Fool's story being offered as equivalent to what the Fool says and is.

L. C. KNIGHTS.

LOVEJOY AND THE HISTORY OF IDEAS

THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING, by Arthur O. Lovejoy (Harvard University Press, 1936). Originally delivered as the William James Lectures at Harvard, 1933.

ESSAYS IN THE HISTORY OF IDEAS, by Arthur O. Lovejoy (The John Hopkins Press, 1948—C.U.P. 27/6).

What is known to the literary student in England as background work (the sort of thing represented by Mr. Basil Willey's volumes) passes more formally and formidably in America as the History (or sometimes even the Historiography) of Ideas. *The History of Ideas* is neither literary history, nor, strictly speaking, the history of philosophy, although it embodies something of both. Its stage of activity is best conceived by observing its scholars in actual performance, but something of its aims and methods may be suggested by the following passage from Arthur O. Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being*:

> 'By the history of ideas I mean something at once more specific and less restricted than the history of philosophy. It is differentiated primarily by the character of the units with which it concerns itself. Though it deals in great part with the same material as the other branches of the history of thought and depends greatly upon their prior labors, it divides that material in a special way, brings the parts of it into new groupings and relations, views it from the standpoint of a distinctive purpose. Its initial procedure may be said—though the parallel has its dangers—to be somewhat analogous to that of analytic chemistry. In dealing with the history of philosophical doctrines, for example, it cuts into the hard and fast individual systems and, for its own purposes, breaks them up into their component elements, into what may be called their unit-ideas'.

An obvious danger in such a new 'field', and particularly in one whose birth seems a little artificial, is that since the material with which it deals belongs to it only by temporary adoption—is, in fact, abstracted from other fields—the new disciplines to which that material is submitted may behave towards it with a certain step-motherly indifference. The 'distinctive purpose' which Professor Lovejoy mentions in the above passage is, I suppose, the clarification of those historical confusions and ambiguities that prevail under the characteristic slogans of an age. Such clarifications are necessarily

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valuable to the literary critic, whose judgments and evaluations should be enforced with as clear and accurate knowledge as possible. But at this point a restatement of certain things that have been said in *Scrutiny* on repeated occasions is hardly avoidable. The historian of ideas, quite as clearly as the literary historian, should have a norm of critical relevance before him constantly. Literature provides a large portion of the chief documents to which these historians resort in their analyses, but the 'facts' provided by documents carry a different (and possibly lesser, certainly less subtle) truth value than the kind of knowledge discoverable in literature sensitively responded to as such. If the most is to be made of literature even considered under its documentary aspect, this distinction must be kept in mind. But only the trained literary critic is likely to do so—or even to know what kind of a distinction is involved, or that it exists at all.

There is a good deal of evidence in Professor Lovejoy's essays that he is aware of this distinction, and what is better, his actual practice frequently reveals him with the distinction firmly held in mind. But there are several momentous lapses, the most monumental of which will be discussed a little later; and even when Professor Lovejoy is discussing the historiography of ideas in theory he occasionally offers formulations that raise hesitations in one's mind. For example, there are disturbing implications in the following passage, also from *The Great Chain of Being*:

> 'It is this characteristic of the study of the history of ideas in literature which often puzzles students—even advanced students—in the present-day literature departments in our universities. Some of them . . . are repelled when called upon to study some writer whose work, *as* literature, is now dead—or at best, of extremely slight value, according to our present aesthetic and intellectual standards. Why not stick to the masterpieces, such students exclaim—or at least to these *plus* the minor classics—the things that can be still read with pleasure, or with a feeling of the significance for men of the present age of the ideas or the moods of feeling which they express? This is a natural enough state of mind, if you don't regard the study of literary history as including within its province the study of the ideas and feelings which other men in past times have been moved by, and of the processes by which what may be called literary and philosophical public opinion is formed. But if you *do* think the historian of literature ought to concern himself with these matters, your minor writer may be as important as—he may often, from this point of view, be more important than—the authors of what are now regarded as the masterpieces'.

This quotation certainly seems exact enough in what it says, and yet I experience great difficulty in focussing it precisely. The reason may be found, I think, by comparing it with, say, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent'. At first it seems to be saying very much the same thing: to be recommending a relationship with the *whole*

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past (and Eliot more than any other critic has insisted on the importance of the minor writers in achieving this relationship), an awareness that the mind of Europe 'is a mind that changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing *en route* . . . '. But then the emphasis in Professor Lovejoy's essay suddenly seems to fall with a muted insistence on the way of erudition as the suitable means towards achieving this sense of the past; and the uses to which the kind of erudition recommended will be put, even by 'advanced students', is already grimly familiar. One is not quite sure about certain terms in the above passage either. What constitutes the 'minor classic' that the hypothetical student professes himself willing to read? And on what lower level do the 'minor writers' whom Professor Lovejoy says they should also read first make their appearance? There is a distinction here which, if made at all, does not seem clearly and firmly held. And to say that 'the ideas and feelings which other men in past times have been moved by' are best studied in such writers (this is, at any rate, an implicit assumption in the above passage) is, to put it modestly, a dangerous generalization. The question, of course, is not really whether such writers should be read or not; it is the more important question of the way they should be read if the task is undertaken, and the kind of importance that should be attached to them. But it is pointless to discuss such problems in general terms, and in any event Professor Lovejoy's dealings with the major writers are likely to prove more illuminating.

The recent publication of *Essays in the History of Ideas* marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the History of Ideas Club at John Hopkins' University, and it made generally accessible for the first time a number of essays selected from Professor Lovejoy's work over the past quarter century. The essays at their best reveal a critical and analytic intelligence of genuine distinction, but at a lower level they are confirmatory of the hesitations suggested above concerning the historiography of ideas. Perhaps in a note as short as the present one the two extremes can be best discussed by comparing Lovejoy's treatment of the poet he handles most unsatisfactorily to his treatment of the one with whom he is most successful. It is hardly surprising that a historian of ideas should falter on Milton; it is perhaps more expected that he should prove singularly successful with Coleridge.

I am not referring here to the academically well-known essay which is devoted entirely to Milton, 'Milton and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall'. This essay, taking as its point of departure Adam's speech to the Archangel Michael in which Adam expresses his belief that he did the right thing after all about the apple, seeing so much good came from it, is mainly an attempt to show that there was an ancient and respectable tradition in religious writings for this attitude. Such investigations certainly have their value, and Professor Lovejoy usually conducts them with an exactness and point that is refreshingly tidy after the slopped-over erudition of much American scholarly writing. But the sense that

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gets chiefly through to me from the verse in question is that for 'a paradox which had been embraced by Ambrose, Leo the Great, Gregory the Great, Francis de Sales, and Du Bartas', Adam hardly succeeds in being more than grandly casual about the whole thing. That such annotations add 'voluminosity' to Milton's verse (a point that Professor Lovejoy makes in an earlier essay) is not convincingly demonstrated by such analyses, whatever else their interest may be.

The essential weakness in Lovejoy's handling of Milton is revealed more incidentally in the opening essay, 'The Historiography of Ideas'. This essay is, in part, an attempt to break down the departmentalization of studies which has occurred in American universities, and to bring about co-operative effort among scholars. This seems a fine goal, but Professor Lovejoy hardly adduces sufficient safeguards to prevent such co-operative scholarship from turning into an anonymous movement whose conduct and aims would represent the antithesis of any adequately sensitive response to literature conceived as something more than a mass of evidence waiting to be discovered, tested, and co-ordinated. He speaks freely of the 'specialist', but hardly at all of those essentially non-specialist disciplines which would provide the perspective in which the diverse activities of the 'specialists' would have to converge, finally, to some kind of order and relevancy. There is little to grow uneasy about in Professor Lovejoy's initial statement of the argument:

> 'From all that has so far been said one conclusion seems to me to emerge almost too plainly to require statement. It is that in almost all the branches of historiography which deal with the history of men's thoughts or opinions, and the affective attitudes and behaviour associated with these, there is imperative need of more definite, responsible, organized collaboration between specialists in these several branches than has hitherto been customary—collaboration too, in some cases, between historians and specialists in non-historical disciplines, notably the natural sciences'.

And Professor Lovejoy offers an important qualification:

> 'What I have in mind is not simply the parcelling out of the subdivisions of a large subject among specialists in those subdivisions; it is the convergence upon *each* of them of all the special knowledge from all these subdivisions which is genuinely pertinent to it'.

That specialists are frequently endowed with the kind of critical sensibility that would enable them to gauge 'pertinence' with much sureness one may doubt. And if the specialists managed to handle this miscellaneous knowledge pertinently as it impinged on their own subdivisions, the more important question of how they would relate their own subdivisions to the larger subject seems oddly neglected. One suspects that such unity as would inhere in such a co-operative scheme would probably result from a Central Committee which would co-ordinate the 'methodologies' and 'findings'

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of the specialists under an over-all pattern, and would have very little to do with any sensitive recognition of the formal unity of the work of art which the specialists originally set out to investigate.

This impression is confirmed when Professor Lovejoy describes a project he would like to see undertaken—'a book of annotations on *Paradise Lost* and of studies on special historical and literary aspects of that poem'. Professor Lovejoy then enters into some detail:

> 'I am unable to discover, through some bibliographical search and inquiries of English scholars, that there exists any modern work of this character, bringing together all the knowledge needed for placing that great English classic in its historical relations, and for the adequate illumination of the ideas which it contains. And the reason, no doubt, is that such a work cannot now be decently done by one man, unaided; it needs . . . the co-operation not only of a number of specialists in English, but also of a classical scholar, a mediævalist, a philosopher, a student of rabbinical and other Jewish literature, a theologian versed in early Protestant divinity, special students both of French and Italian literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and a historian of science specially at home in early modern astronomy'.

One would not wish to under-estimate the importance of background materials in enriching one's enjoyment of poetry, but if all this is necessary for a fully adequate reading of *Paradise Lost*, then it has ceased to exist in any significant way. However, Professor Lovejoy has already made it clear that he is keeping his eye on other things than the ultimate rights of the poetry:

> 'A scholar, for example, decides to attempt a special study of Milton, or narrowing his subject of investigation still further of *Paradise Lost*. It is, of course, possible to treat that work from an exclusively æsthetic point of view, as "pure literature", without raising any historical questions about it—though, if I may thus parenthetically dogmatize, a great part even of the æsthetic values of the poem will thereby be lost. In any case, *Paradise Lost* is, *inter alia*, an extremely interesting phenomenon in the history of the activities of the human mind; and it is, in part, as such that most scholars in English literature now approach it. Now *Paradise Lost* is not merely, as the schoolboy noted with surprise, full of familiar quotations; it is also full of ideas, which, if only as a means to the understanding of what Milton meant, and of the movement of his mind as he composed, need to be seen in their historical perspectives . . . Even to recognize what is distinctive either of his style or his thought *as* distinctive, it is necessary to have both an extensive and a fairly intimate acquaintance with manifestations of the same ideas elsewhere, especially among his contemporaries and among those of his predecessors with whom he is known, or can be fairly presumed, to have been acquainted'.

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The concluding sentence as regards style (at least style as relative to an evaluation of the poetry) is simply not true. Anyone interested in Milton as a 'thinker' is, of course, faced with a different problem. One might further say that if Milton's rhythm in poetry is so inept that 'the movement of his mind as he composed' (I assume that Professor Lovejoy is referring to Milton's rhythm in this phrase, but he could mean other things) has to be set in a fully documented perspective to be comprehended, one is quite right to forget that he was a poet and remember that he was also any one of a number of other things.

A propos of these recommendations for the study of Milton, I find the opening sentence of a recent review in *The Toronto Quarterly* relevant here. 'One of the minor paradoxes in the literary history of our time', it declares, 'is that the neglect and depreciation of Milton by the poets, their camp followers among the critics, and at last the general reader, has been accompanied by twenty-five years of vigorous Miltonic scholarship'. This is true enough, and I find it extremely sinister in its implications for Milton, who, like any other poet I imagine, would prefer being read to being excavated. I suspect that the general neglect of Milton to-day is more to be attributed to those twenty-five years of vigorous Miltonic scholarship, which have been so much concerned with keeping the body on view, than it is to any attempt on the part of the poets and their camp followers among the critics to bring Milton's poetry into immediate communication with a living sensibility.

But as I said, Professor Lovejoy is not at his best on Milton. Coleridge presents an entirely different kind of problem to Lovejoy, and he handles it beautifully. There can be little doubt that the essay, 'Coleridge and Kant's Two Worlds', is the best in the book, and although it deals chiefly with the metaphysics it elucidates Coleridge's mind in a way that is intimately relevant both to one's sense of his personality and his poetry. Part of the satisfaction one has in reading it comes from the exhibition of the highly disciplined control and precise knowledge with which order and clarity is introduced into a subject most people would agree is almost intractable. There is occasionally a professorial quaintness present in Lovejoy's style (it has been apparent in some of the passages quoted), but in this essay the words cut through and define the thought with such trenchant economy and sureness, and at the same time they exhibit, in spite of all the burden they must carry, such a delicate awareness of the pressure of Coleridge's personality in the material, that one would dare advance this essay as an almost perfect model of analytical exposition.

I find it particularly illuminating about the poets Milton and Coleridge that they should invite such different performances from Professor Lovejoy. In the case of Coleridge, in a genuinely fine analysis of 'The Dejection Ode', Professor Lovejoy shows that despite a number of Kantian interpretations offered by earlier critics, 'Coleridge is not expressing the thesis of "transcendental" idealism that the mind gives form to the world of objects that it

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perceives; he is expressing, out of a painful personal experience, the psychological fact that the power of natural beauty to give us pleasure is conditioned by our subjective states'. The concrete analysis that follows is one of the best readings of 'The Dejection Ode' I know of, and this is partly so because it squarely confronts the text itself, cutting away all excrescent interpretations. In dealing with Milton, however, Lovejoy's constant concern seems to be *not* to penetrate through to the poetic text, but to lay on successive layers of annotation and interpretation. The Miltonic scholar seems to sense instinctively a certain thinness in the medium with which he is dealing, and to try to fill it up and provide an extraneous density. Once released from this urge to provide 'density' Professor Lovejoy is much freer to demonstrate his own analytic and critical capacities.

The metaphysics of Coleridge present an undeniable trial to the *literary* student whose attempt to 'do' something about it, has in all probability, led him towards I. A. Richards, with the result that it was left undone. Professor Lovejoy's essay does a good deal towards calming the uneasy conscience of such a student, and it gives him, most importantly, a sense of the quality of Coleridge's speculative thought. The essay does not discuss Coleridge on the imagination; it is concerned with Coleridge's rejection of Hartley's necessitarianism, and his struggle to formulate his belief in the moral freedom of the individual. But as Professor Lovejoy points out, this carries one up to the very threshold of the other problem—is, in fact, the necessary preparation for it. 'To know Coleridge as man or as writer', Lovejoy remarks near the beginning of this essay, 'it is necessary to understand (if possible) the nature and interrelations of those philosophic ideas—abstract, often confused, usually sketchily expressed in any single passage, frequently conflicting with one another—which nevertheless were to him the most vital things in existence'. It is this sense of their vitality to Coleridge that Lovejoy manages to communicate, and which gives the paper so much of its value. Such an achievement belongs to a more intimate order than anything likely to be won by any highly schematized co-operative scholarship, or by demolition squads, however highly trained, breaking down idea-complexes.

In this brief discussion I have wished to isolate what seem to me two extremes in Professor Lovejoy's practice. His method might have been more clearly examined in such essays as 'On the Discrimination of Romanticisms', or 'The Parallel of Deism and Classicism', or more elaborately in *The Great Chain of Being*. But Professor Lovejoy's remarks on Milton illuminate with unusual vividness some of the dangers that stalk the historiographer of ideas, while 'Coleridge and Kant's Two Worlds' seems to me to be somewhat arbitrarily brought under the heading 'Historiography of Ideas' at all, and thereby to offer, because of its very success, an implicit criticism of methods that more recognizably exhibit the marks of the historiographer's interests.

MARIUS BEWLEY.

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HOMAGE TO COMMON SENSE

FRANCIS JEFFREY OF THE EDINBURGH REVIEW, by James A. Greig (Oliver and Boyd, 21/-).

There was certainly room for a new study of Jeffrey. It is nearly forty years since Professor Nichol Smith's volume of selections appeared in the Oxford Miscellany series: L. E. Gates's essay was even earlier; and most people still draw their knowledge of him from the official surveys—Elton, the *Cambridge History*, Saintsbury's *History of Criticism*—written by men whose taste was formed at least before 1914. The popular legend derives from even further back and amounts to little more than a vague notion of an insensitive pontificator who was rude about Wordsworth and Keats (that Jeffrey's review of Keats was favourable and that Monckton Milnes dedicated the *Life and Letters* to him is even now by no means common knowledge).

Dr. Greig has the enthusiasm of a compatriot and something of temperamental affinity with his subject. His work is based on a thorough knowledge of Jeffrey's actual writings and a wide scholarship covering memoirs, biographies and general studies of the period. He has even read a good deal of the forgotten literature which it fell to Jeffrey to review, including Southey's epics. He gives us a sound and lively account of Jeffrey's contemporary reputation and the later fluctuations of critical opinion on his work —a surprisingly odd and inconsistent assortment. He notes Jeffrey's relation to the Scotland of his day, the environment which had produced a little earlier Hume and Adam Smith, and brings out well the intellectual agility and energy which make his student days seem like a direct and intentional preparation for his later work as a reviewer. Dr. Greig reminds us that Jeffrey's main business was the law, and that his whole literary output together with the editorial work of the *Edinburgh* had to be fitted into his spare time. He shows that although he made no profession of scholarship Jeffrey's learning should not be too easily dismissed, but that his essential merits lie rather in his firm grasp of practical living and his tendency to bring literature, politics and philosophy equally to that ultimate test. He was always anti-specialist and anti-academic.

Dr. Greig has no difficulty in demonstrating Jeffrey's critical impartiality, whether in dealing with a popular hero (Burns), a personal friend (Scott), an enemy of the *Edinburgh* (Byron, as a result of Brougham's demolition of *Hours of Idleness*), a protégé of the *Edinburgh's* publisher (James Montgomery, author of *The Wanderer of Switzerland*, reviewed in 1806), a political ally (Fox's *History of James II*, 1808), or a new young poet moving in unpopular circles (Keats). He can be seen bringing forward what he thought unrecognized talent in Hogg's *The Queen's Wake* and Tennant's *Anster Fair*, and standing up for Barry Cornwall and

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Leigh Hunt. If he appears to have had a kind of double standard for literature, this was to some extent deliberate: his severity increased with the distinction of the writer under review, in the belief that unless clearly discriminated, 'faults' were apt to be praised along with 'beauties'. Moreover his primary concern was the moral tendency of a work, its relation to ordinary living, and his strongest condemnation was reserved for egoism, affectation and unwarranted assumption of superiority. It seems unlikely that he really thought Wordsworth absolutely inferior in poetic power to Wilson, Hogg, Cornwall or other minor poets whom he praised, but the power, as he saw it, was at the service of a perverse poetic system and a false scheme of values. In general Dr. Greig claims that Jeffrey was fundamentally right about Wordsworth and that the time has come to admit the fact.

Unfortunately his revaluation is not related to any comprehensive modern view of literary history. He seems unaware that a general reaction set in against the whole Romantic attitude in poetry and criticism some thirty years ago and that to argue solemnly against the pronouncements of Saintsbury and the rest at this date is rather flogging dead horses. His own reaction against romanticism is that of one still to some extent within the nineteenth-century tradition: his views are not unlike those of Irving Babbitt, whom he mentions with approval. The only modern critics quoted are Professor Garrod, Mr. F. L. Lucas, Mr. Herbert Read and Mr. Aldous Huxley. Dr. Greig's argument against Wordsworth is conducted with a curious animus (see the chapter called 'The Menace'): at times, indeed, Wordsworth's influence appears to be made responsible for most of the disasters of modern civilization, including Hitler and the late war. Various bits of irrelevant evidence are brought up against him, from Annette Vallon to the comments of the Grasmere (or Rydal?) butcher's boy, and his 'thought' is abstracted from the poetry and held up to ridicule. We are presumably to consider this as emulating 'Jeffrey's endeavour to see literature—and life—as a whole': Dr. Greig, one suspects, recognizes no alternative but art for art's sake and what he would call mere technical discussion. Any stick will do, perhaps, to beat the more extravagant Wordsworthians, but a true assessment must depend on an altogether more subtle analysis of what is actually there in the poetry, such as Dr. Greig gives us no assurance that he can command. At times we find him apparently endorsing the most conventional valuations—does he really, for example, consider the *Ode to Duty* a great poem? He contrasts Elizabethan with nineteenth-century 'romanticism' in a manner which ignores altogether the quality of unified sensibility that we have come to recognize in the Metaphysicals, and lapses into bluff over-simplifications: 'Where do we find Shakespeare bemusing himself by lengthy theorizings about poetic diction?' 'Shakespeare nowhere teaches that beatific wisdom may be acquired merely by sitting passive and absorbing impulses from vernal woods' etc. His attempts to see things from the Jeffreyan angle are admirable up to a point, and it is right

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that we should do justice to Jeffrey's shrewdness and sense, but for an adequate critical view of the period it will hardly do simply to swing the pendulum back: a more comprehensive understanding is needed, one which would also do justice to the insights of Coleridge.[1]

Part of the trouble is that Dr. Greig deals with Jeffrey too much in isolation. He dismisses far too easily Leslie Stephen's opinion that Jeffrey belonged essentially to the eighteenth century: interpreting it narrowly as implying a mere repetition of *Augustan* commonplaces he points to the various passages in which Jeffrey explicitly stated the superiority of the Elizabethan age to all others. But Leslie Stephen was talking about general habits of mind, shared by Crabbe, Jane Austen and Peacock as well as others of the reviewers: if we put Jeffrey in perspective in this way we can see his relation to Johnson in the critical tradition. Similarly there is a vein of opinion opposed to the general tendencies of romanticism which runs on through the reviews down to Arnold (if not beyond—see, for instance, the 1872 *Quarterly* article on the Pre-Raphaelites, entitled 'The Latest Development in Literary Poetry').[2] Jeffrey's work is part of this link between the characteristic views of the two centuries. What is called throughout this book the 'Jeffreyan attitude' might more reasonably be described as a personal variation of eighteenth-century common sense.

Common sense alone, of course, has its limitations. The critic concerned to keep literature in touch with ordinary human values and moral standards needs the most sensitive response to what is actually before him: the slightest blunting of sensibility may result in taking the will for the deed—a fault which can be just as corrupting and as far-reaching in its results as the kind of romanticism Dr. Greig deplores. It is for this reason that Jeffrey's occasional tolerance of Regency mediocrity is a more serious failing that Dr. Greig seems to realize: it is not just a matter of over-estimating 'the technical strength' of Rogers and Campbell, but of distinguishing between the living and the dead, between that which is grasped and presented and that which is merely talked about and gestured towards. Dr. Greig argues convincingly that the famous 'prophecy' passage of 1829 refers rather more to the contemporary state of reputations than to Jeffrey's own view of intrinsic merit. All the same, it occurs in a much too favourable review of Mrs. Hemans, and there are other things to explain away—the review of Campbell's *Theodric* which provoked *Blackwood's* to taunts about 'The Bairnly School of Criticism', and the maudlin letter to Dickens on the subject of Little Nell.

This, however, is not where the stress should be left in any

[1]Not an impossible task if we consider the interesting way Jeffrey sometimes anticipates Coleridge's criticisms of Wordsworth—a fact I mentioned some years ago in this journal: I am glad to find my view confirmed by Dr. Greig, who makes the same point.
[2]Vol. CXXXII, p. 59.

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discussion of Jeffrey. Because of his detachment from the Romantic outlook (or from the various individual reactions that we group under the one title) he was able to point to some of its defects in a way that we in our post-Romantic detachment can at length admit to be sound and shrewd, while he was less unappreciative of Romantic achievements than is generally realized. That does not by itself make him a great critic, much less the prophet for our times that Dr. Greig occasionally suggests. Nevertheless it is desirable that a full study of this kind should be available, and one can only regret that it is not based on a more adequate critical method.

R. G. Cox.

MEN OF LETTERS AND THE ENGLISH PUBLIC IN THE XVIIIth CENTURY, 1660 - 1744: DRYDEN, ADDISON, POPE, by Alexandre Beljame. Edited by Bonamy Dobrée. Translated by E. O. Lorimer (*Routledge and Kegan Paul*, 25/-).

Beljame's *Le Public et les Hommes de Lettres en Angleterre au Dix-huitième Siècle* first appeared in 1881, seven years before the death of Arnold. Why we should have had to wait nearly seventy years for an English translation is likely to remain a mystery: the important thing is that at this date a translation is still well worth while. Scholars have for decades acknowledged it as a standard work, but students have often had to be content with the relevant parts of more general and less detailed books such as Courthope's *History of English Poetry* or Leslie Stephen's invaluable *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century*. There have been studies of the literary profession in earlier and later times, but no one writing in English has covered so thoroughly the crucial transition period between the Restoration and the death of Pope. Anyone going over the ground again would of necessity have to start from the facts assembled by Beljame's scholarship. He was also a pioneer in the whole field of investigation of literary sociology, with an instinct for the vital questions: By whom, in a given period, did writers expect to be read? What level of taste could they assume in their public? Who provided their bread and butter, and how directly did this affect the character of their work? What was their status in society?—and so on. His information, as a result, is of the kind useful to the critic who starts from the literature itself: it is not merely a miscellaneous assemblage of facts about 'background'.

That seventy years should have shown up a number of minor errors of fact and emphasis is hardly surprising. Most of these are corrected in the English version by additional footnotes from Professor Dobrée, who also provides an introduction discussing the general lines of Beljame's thesis. He notes a certain over-simplification—a neglect of the better figures of Restoration literature, an exaggerated view of Jeremy Collier's importance, an unduly high estimate of Addison and his influence, a general

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tendency to accept too easily the evidence of satirists concerning social life. The criticisms are fair up to a point and the warnings needed: it is true, too, that Beljame's dealings with Restoration drama have a somewhat Victorian tone. On the other hand Professor Dobrée's comments themselves, especially those aiming to redress the balance in favour of the drama, have sometimes an air of special pleading. It may have been unscholarly of Beljame to forget that many of his strictures on Restoration drama would apply equally well to, say, Beaumont and Fletcher, but the primary critical point is a comment on Beaumont and Fletcher. The reader, however, is put in a position to make his own adjustment between these different views, which is what really matters. As for the account of Addison, it is perhaps couched in over-enthusiastic terms, but there is still a tendency to think of him too much as a Victorian, or as quaintly 'period' in the manner of school productions of Goldsmith and Sheridan. The genuine achievement of defining and expressing the essential Augustan ethos, and of bringing together the public and creating the taste for the novel, still hardly receives due recognition.

The main substance of the book in its broad outlines retains all its significance—the change from authorship as dependent on court patronage to authorship as an organized profession with a public in something like the modern sense and a properly functioning intermediary in the publisher. Beljame claims, with justice, that a recognition of just how new and unprecedented a thing was the independence of Pope should make it easier to arrive at a fair view of his personality and behaviour and to avoid the distortions so often introduced into criticism from inadequate biography.

Beljame's thorough bibliography has been carefully revised and brought up to date; there is a full index; and altogether the editor and translator deserve the gratitude of all students of literature for making this classic study available in such a useful form. It is a pity it could not have been produced at a more reasonable price.

R. G. Cox.

BEATRICE WEBB IN PARTNERSHIP

OUR PARTNERSHIP, by Beatrice Webb (*Longmans*, 25/-).

This belated notice the present reviewer sees as primarily an occasion for an appeal to the publishers to reprint *My Apprenticeship*, which has been unobtainable for years. That work, as I argue earlier in these pages, should be recognized as an English classic that has a special value for the reader whose interests are in the first place 'literary', and for the 'director of English studies' who is seriously preoccupied with the problem of humane education. The admirer of *My Apprenticeship* will have gone on eagerly to *Our Partnership* and have read it with great interest. But, in the nature of the case, the later work couldn't be expected to achieve

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anything like the classical quality of the earlier. The partnership established, Beatrice Webb's formative years were over; *My Apprenticeship* written, the classical story of personal development and quest for a vocation—a story involving a background of representative family life and family history—had been told. *Our Partnership* records the exacting and enormous labours to which the Webbs together gave their lives; its interest is primarily political-historical—an interest that must of course be great for all educated readers, though it is not of a kind to rank the later book in English literature with *My Apprenticeship*.

Beatrice Webb clearly had remarkable gifts for the work to which she devoted herself—and in which she felt herself fulfilled. For the Maggie Tulliver of *My Apprenticeship* miraculously realized her dream and aspiration: love identified with devotion to an inspiring and exalting duty—and found her vocation in labours more akin to those of the intellectual who sub-edited *The Westminster Review* and translated Spinoza and Feuerbach than to those of the great novelist who wrote *Middlemarch*. The qualities in which Beatrice Potter so strikingly resembles George Eliot are there, of course, in *Our Partnership*. We have them in the appraisals of character and personality in which, incidentally to the exposition of the main themes, the book is rich. We have them in the admiring sympathy (characteristically qualified) with which she contemplates the Samurai of the Salvation Army (pp. 401-2):

> 'In respect to personal character, all these men and women constitute a *Samurai* caste, that is, they are men and women selected for their power of subordinating themselves to their cause, most assuredly a remarkable type of ecclesiastic: remarkable, because there is no inequality between man and woman, because home life and married life are combined with a complete dedication of the individual to spiritual service. A beautiful spirit of love and personal service, of content and joy, permeates the service; there is a persistent note of courtesy to others and open-mindedness to the world. The men, and some of the women, are far more cultivated than is usual with persons of the same social status—one can talk to them quite freely—far more freely than you could talk to an elementary school teacher, or trade union official . . . But the intensely compelling nature of the appeal to become converted made tonight by Brigadier Jackson and his wife, I confess, somewhat frightened me off recommending that the Salvation Army should be state- or rate-aided in this work of proselytising persons committed to their care for secular reasons! Is is right to submit men, weakened by suffering, to this religious pressure exercised by the very persons who command their labour?'

Or take these observations provoked by *The Madras House* and *Misalliance* (pp. 447-8):

> 'G.B.S. is brilliant but disgusting; Granville-Barker is intellectual but dull. They both harp on the mere physical

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attractions of men to women, and women to men, coupled with the insignificance of the female for any other purpose but sex attraction, with tiresome iteration. That is not the world I live in, or indeed, think to exist outside a limited circle . . .

Where I think G.B.S., Granville-Barker, H. G. Wells and many other of the most modern authors go wrong, from the standpoint of realism in its best sense, is their complete ignoring of religion. By religion, I mean the communion of the soul with some righteousness *felt to be outside and above itself*. This may take the conscious form of prayer: or the unconscious form of ever-present and persisting aspirations—a faith, a hope and a devotion to a wholly disinterested purpose. It is this unconscious form of religion which lies at the base of all Sidney's activity'.

It is this profound seriousness which shows itself in her penetrating evaluations of personality—the quick intelligence with which she appraises the politicians, Civil Servants, intellectuals, public figures and the others with whom she has to do. An anthology of these personal notes would make lively and very impressive reading: Asquith, Balfour, Sir Edward Grey, Milner, Haldane, Churchill, John Burns, Edward VII—the full list would be long. The literary reader finds a special interest in her comments on intellectuals and authors. That she could be radically critical of the old and intimate Fabian comrade, Shaw, comes out in a passage quoted above. With a naïvety a little disconcerting in one so intelligent, she is enormously impressed by *Man and Superman*. But *Major Barbara* precipitates the firm placing judgment (p. 314):

'G.B.S.'s play turned out to be a dance of devils—amazingly clever, grimly powerful in the second act—but ending, as all his plays end (or at any rate most of them), in an intellectual and moral morass.

. . . G.B.S. is gambling with ideas and emotions in a way that distresses slow-minded prigs like Sidney and me, and hurts those with any fastidiousness. But the stupid public will stand a good deal from one who is acclaimed as an unrivalled wit by the great ones of the world'.

As a critic of his plays she had had the advantage (had that been necessary) of having witnessed his vanity, irresponsibility and obtuse and utter irreverence in the field of action:

'G.B.S. badly beaten; elsewhere the Progressives romping back with practically undiminished numbers. As to the first event, we are not wholly grieved . . . He certainly showed himself hopelessly intractable during the election . . . Insisted that he was an atheist; that, though a teetotaller, he would force every citizen to imbibe a quartern of rum to cure any tendency to intoxication; laughed at the Nonconformist conscience; chaffed the Catholics about transsubstantiation; abused the Liberals, and contemptuously patronized the Conservatives . . . '.

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Bertrand Russell is another friend, at first warmly admired, of whom she becomes profoundly critical, till, provoked by the *Free Man's Worship*, she makes the drastic comment to be found on p. 278.

To the present reviewer one of the most poignantly significant things in the book is the footnote on p. 415 to this mention of Rupert Brooke: 'The other five were, I think, commonplace—Schloss, Strachey, Brooke (a poetic beauty)' . . . The footnote runs:

> 'This was the afterwards famous Rupert Brooke who put me off the track of his distinction by delivering a super-conceited lecture on the relation of the university man to the common herd of democracy. Also I am poetry blind like some persons are colour blind'.

If Beatrice Webb was 'poetry blind', it is impossible to believe that she was congenitally so—indeed, she hadn't supposed herself to be so in the formative years. More generally and positively, there is strong reason for holding that she was potentially a good literary critic, so that there is a significant irony in her being able to allege 'incapacity' in order to explain away the quick and sure report of her intelligence on Brooke. By her own account (see p. 118 above) she needed to be a competent reader of literature.

And early in *Our Partnership* (p. 16) she says:

> 'We accordingly devoted ourselves as scientists to the study of social institutions, from trade unions to Cabinets, from family relations to churches, from economics to literature—a field itself so extensive that we have never been able to compass more than a few selected fragments of it'.

The dilemma of the age of specialization is given us here—for 'fragments', of course, doesn't adequately express the inadequacy these scientists could not escape. And we cannot help seeing a significant relation between the development of Maggie Tulliver into the intellectual of *Soviet Russia : a New Civilization*, and such autobiographical notes as this (p. 292):

> 'What is utterly lacking [in the intellectual society that the Partners kept] is art, literature for its own sake, and music—whilst physical science only creeps up as analogous and illustrative matter; history appears in much the same aspect'.

F. R. LEAVIS.

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